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THE INFLUENCE OF KING EDWARD

AND ESSAYS ON OTHER SUBJECTS

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BY THE VISCOUNT ESHER, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.

N No. 76

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LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET W.
1915

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NOTE

I WISH to acknowledge gratefully the kindness of the editors of the *Times*, the *Westminster Gazette*, the *New Statesman*, and the *National* and *Quarterly Reviews*, who have permitted the reprinting of the essays contained in this volume.

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June 23, 1914.

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THE CHARACTER OF KING EDWARD VII.

"NEVER was British Prince baptized under happier circumstances than Edward, Prince of Wales, the son of Queen Victoria. At a period of all but universal peace throughout the world, such as can scarcely be paralleled since the great epoch from which our religion takes its date, a peace cemented not merely by mutual interests and the bonds of a common civilization, but by the growing recognition of deeper principles of duty—at this period our new Edward takes upon him the vows of a soldier in what is pre-eminently the kingdom of peace. Our hopes of the era which will be known to posterity by his name may rise, in this respect, to a far higher flight than the half-inspired prophecy of the Roman poet, who wrote that, in the golden age of his Pollio,

> "'Erunt etiam altera bella,
> Atque iterum ad Trojam magnus mittetur Achilles.'

"Our First Edward ravaged Scotland and Wales; our Third Edward, and his son, the gallant Black Prince, carried desolation into France. But Scotland and Wales belong to *this* Edward, and he to Scotland and Wales; and France is the nearest and most honoured ally of his Mother's Crown. May it be his office to consolidate good-will and unity throughout the world, and may war never be heard of in his time."

This passage appeared in the leading article of the *Times* on January 24, 1842, the morning after the day when King Edward was received into the Church of Christ within the walls of the Garter Chapel of St. George, where on May 20, sixty-eight years later, he was solemnly laid to rest amid the lamentations of his people.

The newspaper paragraph was cut from the *Times* and pasted into her journal by Queen Victoria. Above it is written:

"Bells were ringing and guns firing. I offered up again an anxious prayer that the Almighty would grant a blessing to the ceremony, and we prayed that our little boy might become a true and virtuous Christian in every respect, and *I* pray that he may become the image of his beloved father."

The prophetic insight of the anonymous writer and the prayers of the young mother have had a curious and wonderful fulfilment. In those days to have thought of the boy Prince as King by other than his father's name was a forecast sufficiently remarkable, without a further anticipation, almost in words, of the noble panegyric of the parliamentary leaders which closed the reign of King Edward. When Queen Victoria prayed for her little boy to grow up in the likeness of Prince Albert, she little dreamed that the son would live to appeal to the hearts of the British people at home and scattered over an Empire then unimagined in a fashion and degree quite beyond the range of his illustrious father.

It has been noticed that Whig writers sixty years ago used to say that when the memories of the nineteenth century began to see the light, people in this country would realize what a debt of gratitude they owed to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. These writers had in mind the indefatigable zeal shown by the Queen in transacting the business of State, her impartiality in dealing with contending factions, the sleepless watch which she kept over the actions of her Ministers, and her single-minded regard for the interests of her people abroad and at home.

There was, however, another and unforeseen debt of gratitude which we owe to the Queen and the Prince. It is the character and kingly equipment of King Edward.

Who can determine the precise influence, upon any man, of inheritance and environment?

Less than three months before Queen Victoria's eldest son was born, Lord Melbourne—then about to bid farewell as Prime Minister to her whom he had served so faithfully—said, speaking of the Prince: "You told me when you were going to be married that he was perfection, which I thought a little exaggerated then, but really I think now that it is in some degree realized."

King Edward was the child of a love marriage, but the passionate ties which bound his parents together were tempered by serious views of life and its higher duties, rare in people so young and so high-placed.

On the day of his birth the Queen enters in her journal that at twelve minutes to eleven a fine large boy was born. "Oh, how happy, how grateful did I feel to that Almighty Providence who has really blessed me so peculiarly!"

On his christening morn, in that room, which was King Edward's own in after years, his young parents went down on their knees and prayed for the child who some day was to be King in the words already quoted, and thence they passed, arrayed in their robes of the Garter, into St. George's Chapel.

The child's official governess, Sarah Lady Lyttelton, describes the scene:

"Just out of the very agitating, magnificent, impressive business of the day. Such floods of sunshine, through the painted windows, on the fierce, stout features of the royal baby; and such a burst of the Hallelujah chorus, as soon as the service closed! All was overpowering."

"Ah, que Dieu bénisse l'enfant," the King of Prussia said, with glistening eyes and much feeling.

"When the Duchess of Buccleuch set off to do her arduous part, taking the Prince of Wales and giving him up to, and then taking him from, the Archbishop, she made a little room, and I forced my way into it, so as to see the child perfectly, and also how well she did it, and also how neatly she picked H.R.H., mantle, lace, and all, out of the voluminous folds of the Primate's lawn sleeves, and the dangers of his wig, which it was feared the Prince might have laid hold of, and brought awry at least, on quitting his arms. I did not even see,

what I heard admired, the Queen's very devout and affecting manner of kneeling quite down, in spite of her cumbrous robes of the Garter, on first entering the Chapel."

It was on this very spot, where Queen Victoria knelt then, and amid a like pageantry, that a few weeks since* another Queen was kneeling, while another Primate of All England pronounced the final blessing over the open grave of the King whose reign had more than fulfilled the hopes and answered the prayers of those who knelt there on his christening day.

Here are glimpses of the little Prince before he was a year old:

"The Prince of Wales, to judge by his noble countenance and calm manner, will be a fine creature. He is very intelligent, and looks through his large, clear blue eyes full at one with a frequent very sweet smile."

And some months later:

"The Prince of Wales is turning out passionate and determined enough for an autocrat. But he has still his lovely mildness of expression and calm temper in the intervals."

These words were written in October, 1842, and how vividly they recall the King who was ours, and among us only a short while ago!

When he was three and a half years old, Lady Lyttelton speaks of him thus:

* From the *Quarterly Review*, June, 1910.

"The Prince of Wales talks much more English than he did, though he is not articulate like his sister, but rather babyish in accent. He understands a little French and says a few words, but is altogether backward in language, very intelligent, and generous, and good-tempered, with a few passions and *stampings* occasionally. Most exemplary in politeness and manner, bows and offers his hand beautifully, besides saluting *à la militaire*, all unbidden."

As for the Prince's "backwardness," he may well have appeared so to his governess, used as she was to a little Princess, who, when she was only six years old, and when in the glowing pages of "Little Arthur's History" an ancient poet, Wace by name, was mentioned, a poet whose name was utterly unremembered by her embarrassed teacher, retorted:

"Oh yes, I dare say you did know all about him, only you have forgotten it. *Réfléchissez.* Go back to your *youngness*, and you will soon remember."

No wonder her governess adds:

"I certainly never remember in all my *youngness* such a young lady as she is, at her age."

And here is a final touch of the King's childhood. It was October 11, 1847, and he was six years old.

"WINDSOR CASTLE,
"*October* 13, 1847.

"I suppose you will see something in the newspapers of the great escape for which we all, beginning at the top of the tree, have to thank God.

The day before yesterday it was, that the elder children being just setting out on their pony-ride, the odious little Japanese pony, Dwarf, frightened the others; and all set off, being most unluckily, but by no fault of anyone, at the actual moment not held by bridles. The Princess Royal was gently thrown, after a few yards of canter, by her very quiet pony, and not at all hurt: the Prince of Wales was run away with, at the fleetest gallop his pony could go at, all round the lawns. He was strapped into his Spanish seat saddle. But, had the pony gone against a tree, under a bough, or down the slopes, had the groom not, just before, girthed the saddle on, which was found loose, or had the dear child not been so brave as to keep hold of as tight a rein as he could pull, and neither to cry out nor move, we should be now thinking of him in happiness such as—I trust in mercy he may live to inherit some more distant day! The danger was so great, and the sight of his progress so awful, that poor Miss Hildyard, so calm and unnervous, shrieked and ran about distracted; the groom says he never shall forget her cry: 'Oh, for God's sake save the child!' I am thankful that I did not see the horrid sight. The Prince of Wales did not cry, and showed no signs of fear, after one loud call for help at first. Princess Royal was like herself: not frightened, and said nothing on falling off herself; but looking round and seeing her brother, she screamed out: 'Oh! can't they stop him? *Dear* Bertie!' and burst into tears.

"Oh! it was an awful thing.

"Princey's pony is called Arthur, and is often thought slow.

"Yesterday on the Prince taking his writing lesson, Miss Hildyard said: 'Hold your thumb in the right place, Prince of Wales—so—you *can* do it right if you try, I'm sure.' 'Oh yes!' he answered with a sly smile at her, 'I *can*. Arthur *can*

gallop, we know now!' It was the only allusion he made to it—rather a clever one."

Was not the child father of the man? "A noble countenance," "a calm manner," "the large blue eyes looking full at one, a frequent very sweet smile," "a temper which could be passionate and determined, with *stampings* occasionally, but habitually was calm and generous," "most exemplary in politeness and manner." And finally a brave strong heart knowing no fear, and a sly humour to crown all!

How vain appear the attempts of man to shape character, and how inscrutable are the ways of God!

The King was born in that eventful year when Sir Robert Peel succeeded Lord Melbourne as Prime Minister; and during that period when the child's governess was recording her impressions of his baby character, amid the wildest political conflicts, the influence of the Crown, silently and unnoticed, began to assume a shape which altered drastically the relation between the Monarchy and the people, and which culminated in the position occupied by King Edward in the hearts of his subjects and in the counsels of the Empire. It was a combative and critical epoch, in which the Throne itself and those nearest it were not spared.

"Every imaginable calumny" (wrote the Prince Consort) "is heaped upon us, especially upon me; and although a pure nature, conscious of its own

high purposes, is, and ought to be, lifted above attacks, still it is painful to be misrepresented by people of whom one believed better things."

Patience and self-restraint under attack are the only weapons which can with dignity be used by the occupant of a throne. The Queen never thought of, nor would she have tolerated, any vindication or reply. The bitterness and folly of his calumniators served to draw closer together the Prince's friends. Their numbers grew, and as the circle widened, not only did calumny die down, but the high merit of the Prince, his assiduity, his disinterestedness, and his devotion to the country of his adoption, began to be understood and appreciated by every section of the people. It came to be realized after the Exhibition of 1851, when the Prince of Wales was ten years old, that the husband of the Queen was something more than a Royal Consort, that he was a statesman of steady vision and high principle, whose outlook upon life and its duties was bravely faced from a bastion flanked by the deepest sense of religious belief and the keenest conception of the moral responsibilities of the Sovereign.

This was the atmosphere in which King Edward's boyhood passed. His father's German blood and upbringing lent to his character and activities a thoroughness which in most Englishmen is lacking. This thoroughness was never more manifest than in his watchful care over the education of the Prince of Wales. It is almost painful to look back

upon the days and nights of worry and anxiety spent by the Queen and the Prince over the minutest details of the physical, intellectual and moral training of their children, and especially of their eldest son. Nothing—not the smallest thing—was left to chance. The Prince of Wales was not only a part, but in some respects the most significant part of that great trust which had been committed to these two young Sovereigns by the Almighty. Some day he would be the King. It was a terrible, a haunting thought, and it was never through long years absent from the minds of his father and mother. Not a week, not a day, not an hour of the time of this precious youth could safely or properly be wasted. Other lads might occasionally run loose in the springtime, and for other boys it might be legitimate to plunge into the region of romance. But for this boy the pages even of Sir Walter Scott were closed, and he must concentrate, ever concentrate upon "modern languages," upon "history," upon "the sciences"—in short, upon laying solidly the intellectual and moral foundations which, in the eyes of his conscientious and high-minded father, alone could safely bear the mighty superstructure of the Throne. Daily, almost hourly, the Queen and the Prince kept watch and ward over those entrusted with the care of their son. Within the walls of Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle letters and notes constantly passed, and were carefully and elaborately preserved. They recorded the

Queen's anxious solicitude that no boyish longing for excitement should interfere with the Prince's "adherence to and perseverance in the plan both of studies and life" laid down by his father, and the untiring efforts of his tutors to maintain the strict regimen imposed upon them and their charge.

When the Prince of Wales was fifteen he was given a moderate allowance—a sum which would probably be thought mean by many an Eton boy in these plutocratic days—out of which he found his own hats and ties and the small trifles indispensable to a boy's toilet, and for which he accounted to the Queen. It was the first step along the road to independence. The next step was the "privilege" to choose his own dress (but not to pay for it), a freedom accorded by the Queen with some misgiving.

"Dress" (she writes) "is a trifling matter which ought not to be raised to too much importance in our own eyes. But it gives also the *one outward sign* from which people in general can and often do judge upon the internal state of mind and feeling of a person, for this they all see, whilst the other they cannot see. On that account it is of some importance, particularly in persons of high rank. I must now say that we do not wish to control your own taste and fancies, which, on the contrary, we wish you to indulge and develop, but we do *expect* that you will never wear anything *extravagant* or *slang*, not because we don't like it, but because it would prove a want of self-respect and be an offence against decency, leading—as it has often done before in others—to an indifference to what is morally wrong. It would do you much

harm by giving the impression to others that you belonged to the *foolish* and *worthless* persons who are distinguished and known by such dresses. Don't believe that I say this because we do not trust your doing what is right in this respect, but to show you at the outset where the *right* and *wrong* lies, in order that you may clearly see it and never be in doubt about your choice.

"We have such confidence in your good and right and dutiful feelings that we feel certain that you will never abuse the confidence which we place in you by giving you this power—and that you will ever understand that, to receive and seek the advice of those one loves and respects in no way lessens one's independence."

At no time in his life did King Edward in reality require this excellent counsel. His instincts were always true. As a child he disliked brilliant colours, and detested a certain "poplin" frock in which he was painted by Winterhalter.

Those who knew him in later years were always conscious of his strong liking for neatness and order. These qualities were in his view kingly attributes as essential as punctuality. His rooms were a model of tidiness. If anything was out of place he put it straight, and neither books, papers, nor any things of his were ever left in disorder. Nothing was more noticeable in him, and sometimes the fact has been lightly spoken of, than his careful and quick eye for irregularity in dress. Superficial and priggish minds have thought it a failing, indicative of a narrow intelligence, which it sometimes accompanies, although no detail ever

escaped the eyes of Napoleon or Frederick the Great. In point of fact, the King's own dress throughout his life was a pattern of neatness, and he exacted similar care from others. Subconsciously he carried out the precepts of the Queen and the Prince, and though he can hardly have remembered his father's definite and well-reasoned ideas upon this, as upon all matters which concerned the character and demeanour of his children, yet they bore fruit in later years, and no one lived up to or demanded from others a higher standard of decorum than King Edward. To him it was the external token denoting the inner man, orderliness of mind, observation and carefulness, without vulgarity and without display.

On his birthday in 1858, among the gifts which the Prince of Wales received was the following memorandum signed by the Queen and by the Prince. He was just seventeen, he had been appointed a Colonel in the Army, and the Order of the Garter had been bestowed on him by his mother and Sovereign.

MEMORANDUM.

(The Queen and Prince, for the Prince of Wales.)

"The period at which you have arrived will make an important change in your position. Mr. Gibbs, who has watched your childhood, will leave you; you receive rank in that most honourable profession, the British Army; enter into the confraternity of the selected few who wear St. George's Cross on their shoulder as members of the Order of the Garter in token 'of the

Christian fight which they mean to sustain with the temptations and difficulties of this transient life'; and you are placed under the supervision and guidance of a Governor selected from among the members of the aristocracy and the superior officers of the Army.

"What has been asked hitherto from you to be done for your education by the tutor to whom you were responsible will be demanded henceforth as a duty, for the due performance of which you will be answerable to yourself and to your parents, whose express wishes will be indicated and interpreted to you by the Governor.

"Life is composed of duties, and in the due, punctual, and cheerful performance of them the true Christian, true soldier, and true gentleman is recognized.

"You will in future have rooms allotted to your sole use, in order to give you an opportunity of learning how to occupy yourself unaided by others, and to utilize your time in the best manner—viz., such time as may not be otherwise occupied by lessons, by the different tasks which will be given to you by your director of studies, or reserved for exercise and recreation. A new sphere of life will open for you, in which you will have to be taught what to do and what not to do, a subject requiring study more important than any in which you have hitherto been engaged. For it is a subject of *study*, and the most difficult one of your life, how to become a good man and a thorough gentleman.

"The Equerries will take and receive their orders from the Governor. You will never leave the house without reporting yourself to him, and he will settle who is to accompany you, and will give general directions as to the disposition of the day.

"Your personal allowance will be increased; but

it is expected that you will carefully order your expenditure so as to remain strictly within the bounds of the sum allowed to you, which will be amply sufficient for your general requirements.

"To the servants and those below you you will always be courteous and kind, remembering that by having engaged to serve you in return for certain money payments, they have not surrendered their dignity which belongs to them as brother men and brother Christians. You will try to emancipate yourself as much as possible from the thraldom of abject dependence for your daily wants of life on your servants. The more you can do for yourself and the less you need their help, the greater will be your independence and real comfort.

"The Church Catechism has enumerated the duties which you owe to God and your neighbour. Let your rule of conduct be always in strict conformity with these precepts, and remember that the first and principal one of all, given us by our Lord and Saviour Himself, is this, 'that you should love your neighbour as yourself, and do unto men as you would they should do unto you.'

"(Signed) V. R.
"(Signed) A.

"WINDSOR CASTLE,
"*November* 9, 1858."

Care for their son's guidance at this critical period of his life was not confined by his parents to personal direction. His companions were selected after endless trouble and consultation with men in the higher spheres of education and of social life. The Prime Minister was not excluded from these deliberations, and indeed there was no important occasion during the Prince of Wales's minority

when the most capable of her Ministers was not consulted by the Queen before any decision was finally taken affecting the career of the future King.

This was the ever-present idea, the haunting refrain, the dominant consideration, in everything relating to the Prince of Wales. He was not primarily in their view only the eldest son of the Queen. He was the eldest of the Children of England—*les enfants d'Angleterre*—as their old governess called them; and consequently his education was no private matter. It was a State question of first-rate importance, and merited grave consideration, in the gravest style, by grave statesmen. If boy companions were to be selected for the holidays or for a tour in the Highlands, emissaries were sent to the public schools, and headmasters were taken into counsel. If "gentlemen" were to be appointed to wait on the Heir to the Crown, endless trouble was taken to see that the best possible choice was made, and that the persons chosen were adequately seized of their responsibility and duties. It is worth while to quote at length one of these "papers of instruction" in order to show once more the care bestowed upon this precious charge.

MEMORANDUM.

(Confidential: for the guidance of the gentlemen appointed to attend on the Prince of Wales.)

"It appears to be desirable upon the first appointment of the gentlemen to attend upon the

Prince of Wales, that their attention should be called to certain points, in which the sphere of their usefulness may be extended beyond the usual limits of an Equerry's duties, and her Majesty the Queen has therefore authorized the communication to them, in confidence, of this memorandum, not as a code of instructions as to the services they will have to perform, but with a view to establish certain principles by which their own conduct and demeanour may be regulated, and which it is thought may conduce to the benefit of the Prince of Wales.

"The Prince of Wales has arrived at that period in his life when the state of transition commences from the habits, the dependence, and the subjection to control of a boy to the manners and the conduct and ultimately to the self-reliance and responsibility of a man. The most critical, the most important, and the most difficult period of a life-time; that which all parents watch with the greatest anxiety.

"The usual and the most efficient means adopted for ensuring a happy result to this state of transition is to take care that upon entering into contact with the world, the young may be placed in what is commonly called 'a good set.'

"If he falls into such a one at College, is placed in a Regiment distinguished for the gentleman-like conduct of its officers, or enters a public office most in request from the tone of the young men employed in it, the result of such association is usually to be traced in the character of the young man, and in the estimation in which he is generally held.

"The Prince, however, has no opportunity of mixing upon the same terms with young people of his own age, and of obtaining the same advantages of association, and yet more is expected from him than perhaps from any other young man.

"In selecting, therefore, the gentlemen to attend upon the Prince of Wales, the Royal Parents have

chosen them, with great care, with a view to their supplying, in some degree, this want, and becoming themselves the representatives, as it were, of that 'good set,' by association with whom the Prince of Wales may acquire such a tone, and learn such manners and conduct, as may make him socially what his parents wish, and what the country will expect.

"The Prince of Wales must not only be a gentleman, but his rank and position point him out as the first gentleman in the country; he can hold no intermediate position; if not the first gentleman in England, he sinks at once to a level incompatible with his title of Prince of Wales.

"It is not intended in this memorandum to enter into the question of the higher attributes of mind and feeling of a gentleman, but merely to speak of the outward social deportment and manners.

"The qualities which distinguish a gentleman in society are:

"1st. His appearance, his deportment and dress.
"2nd. The character of his relations with, and treatment of others.
"3rd. His desire and power to acquit himself creditably in conversation or whatever is the occupation of the society with which he mixes.

"1st. Appearance, deportment and dress.

"The appearance, deportment and dress of a gentleman consist perhaps more in the absence of certain offences against good taste, and in a careful avoidance of vulgarities and exaggerations of any kind, however generally they may be the fashion of the day, than in the adherence to any rules which can be exactly laid down. A gentleman does not indulge in careless, self-indulgent, lounging ways, such as lolling in armchairs, or on sofas, slouching

in his gait, or placing himself in unbecoming attitudes, with his hands in his pockets, or in any position in which he appears to consult more the idle ease of the moment than the maintenance of the decorum which is characteristic of a polished gentleman. In dress, with scrupulous attention to neatness, and good taste, he will never give in to the unfortunately loose and slang style which predominates at the present day. He will borrow nothing from the fashions of the groom or the game-keeper, and whilst avoiding the frivolity and foolish vanity of dandyism, will take care that his clothes are of the best quality, well made, and suitable to his rank and position.

"The gentlemen will see how much of the examples upon which the young Prince will found his views of carrying out these principles, will naturally depend upon what he daily sees in them; and the Queen will hope that they will pay constant attention to what may appear trifles, but the aggregate of which go far to mark the outward characteristics of a gentleman.

"To all these particulars the Prince of Wales must necessarily pay more attention than any one else. His deportment will be more watched, his dress more criticized.

"There are many habits and practices and much in dress which might be quite natural and unobjectionable for these gentlemen at their own homes and in their ordinary life, which would form dangerous examples for the Prince of Wales to copy, and her Majesty and his Royal Highness would wish them in all their habits to have regard to these consequences, and without any formality, or stiffness of manner, to remember both in deportment and in dress that they are in attendance on the eldest son of the Queen.

"2nd. Manners and conduct towards others.

"The manners and conduct of a gentleman to-

wards others are founded on the basis of kindness, consideration, and the absence of selfishness. There can be no good manners when any one of these principles is sacrificed.

"A prince, particularly, should treat all around him with the most scrupulous good manners, civility and attention.

"He should return every mark of respect, not only with the most punctilious exactitude, but with an appearance of goodwill and cordiality. A salute returned with the air of its being a bore is rather an affront than a civility.

"A prince should never say a harsh or a rude word to anybody, nor indulge in satirical or bantering expressions, by which the person to whom it is addressed may be lowered. As soon as the conversation of a prince makes his companion feel uncomfortable he is sure to have offended against some of the laws of good breeding.

"Punctuality is another of the duties of a well-bred gentleman; no person should ever be kept waiting, but should circumstances render this unavoidable, an apology should always be made, and regret expressed at any inconvenience that may have been incurred.

"The gentlemen will hardly require to have it pointed out to them how much of these habits, so important to the Prince of Wales, may be inculcated and strengthened by association.

"Not only is it desirable that they should be most courteous and kind to all around, but they should quietly, yet steadily, mark in their manner any approach to want of civility or rudeness towards themselves; with every readiness to oblige the young Prince in what is for his benefit, they should always let him see that they maintain their self-respect, can be firm, and do not approve of any liberty being attempted with them. They should be themselves very exact in punctuality. They

should never encourage, or themselves indulge in, ridicule of personal peculiarities or natural defects, children being very prone to laugh at others, and even supposing that they thereby establish for themselves a certain superiority.

"There are many habits and follies that may well be subjected to satire and even quizzing, but these should be as much as possible remarked upon, apart from individuals of whom nothing should be said hurtful or degrading. The fact becoming known that the Prince of Wales had laughed at this or that person would give great offence, and create for him many enemies.

"These remarks apply, of course, in a still stronger degree to anything approaching to a *practical joke*, which should never be permitted.

"3rd. The power to acquit himself creditably in conversation or whatever may be the occupation of society.

"A gentleman having gained the prestige in society of good dress and appearance, and courteous manners, must maintain the good opinion of his companions by showing intelligence in his conversation, and some knowledge of those studies and pursuits which adorn society and make it interesting. Mere games of cards and billiards, and idle gossiping talk, will never teach this; and to a Prince, who has usually to take the lead in conversation, the habit of finding something to say beyond mere questions as to health and remarks upon the weather is most desirable.

"Although, therefore, the Prince of Wales is to have all relaxation and recreation which is desirable (and which, indeed, is quite necessary), the gentlemen in attendance may be of great use if they can succeed by persevering example in inducing the Prince to devote some of his leisure time to music, to the fine arts, either drawing, or looking over drawings, engravings, etc., to hearing poetry,

amusing books, or good plays read aloud; in short, to anything that whilst it amuses may gently exercise the mind. They must give this up if the Prince seems at first disinclined to such pursuits. It will not be within their province to direct what his Royal Highness is to do; but by persevering in such employments themselves, and encouraging and assisting the Prince when he shows the disposition to join them, they may do much to lead him to what is at present so desirable, and will through life conduce so much to his happiness.

"In detailing all these minute points to be attended to, the Royal Parents wish that these gentlemen should be made aware that her Majesty and his Royal Highness have entrusted to them a charge involving something beyond the mere attendance of an Equerry and the making themselves agreeable to his Royal Highness. If they will duly appreciate the responsibility of their position, and taking the points above laid down as the outline, will exercise their own good sense in acting *upon all occasions* upon these principles, thinking no point of detail too minute to be important, but maintaining one steady, consistent line of conduct, they may render essential service to the young Prince and justify the flattering selection made by the Royal Parents."

It must not be supposed that less care was bestowed upon the intellectual training of the Prince of Wales than upon his manners and deportment. The Prince Consort would indeed have been faithless to his own traditions, and to King Leopold and Baron Stockmar, those watchful advisers who so jealously guarded his youth, had he failed to lay down in precise detail the daily tasks of his son.

It is no exaggeration to say that every hour of the Prince of Wales's time, from his earliest boyhood until the death of his father, was mapped out by his governors and preceptors, and submitted for approval. It is no mere phrase, but a sober fact, to say that every day of the boy's life a report of his progress was sent up to his parents. And this was no perfunctory service on the part of his teachers, for hardly a week passed without some criticism of their methods, some word of commendation, or some expression of regret at their failure to come up to the lofty standard which was always before the mind of the Prince Consort.

It would be profitless to go at length into the daily routine of the young Prince's studies. The elaborately prepared tabular statements of his work show no marked originality on the part of his professors, but a somewhat soaring ambition.

Without the stimulus of competition, surrounded by the disturbing influences of regal state, deprived of the free companionship of boys of his own age, it is not surprising that the Prince of Wales, although he never rebelled, passively resisted the high pressure of his father's system of education. It was undoubtedly the case, and King Edward, in referring to those days, regretted the decision which isolated him during the crucial years of his later boyhood from contact with his equals in age and intellectual attainments.

It would not have been surprising if he had acquired no taste for books, because, as he often

himself complained, he was never given any liberty of choice, and every book came before him as a task. History, for instance, as he in later life explained, was presented to him in its driest and most tabulated form. But, notwithstanding these drawbacks, King Edward thoroughly enjoyed biography, and his memory, so largely dependent upon visual keenness, was prodigious, but he often said that of the groundwork of history he had been deprived by reaction from the insistent boredom of his historical teaching in boyhood.

The tutor to whom the Prince of Wales was most warmly attached realized quite early the truth. He saw that the method of high tension was failing to produce the results hoped for by the boy's anxious parents, and that his pupil's too-alert intelligence, his exuberant sense of life, his moral restlessness under restraint, and his budding manhood, were deadly influences entirely subversive of the scholastic ideas of the Prince Consort.

To some not unfrequent expressions of disappointment from the Prince at his son's want of studious reflection this teacher replied:

"At any rate, he is storing up materials for future thought, and is learning almost unconsciously from objective teaching much which, I think, could never have been taught him subjectively."

This accurate and discerning analysis of his capacity was true of King Edward then and throughout his life, and the failing or quality, whichever it may be held to be, was one of the

causes which largely contributed to his successful management of public affairs during his reign. A great reader the King never was, but he was a great observer.

From his German University he brought away no smattering of German metaphysics, but a complete mastery of German speech. His experience of Edinburgh student life, although he found time at Holyrood hang rather heavily, was of permanent value to him. He often spoke in later years with sly amusement of the rather solemn dinners in the old Palace, where the companions of this lad of eighteen were men so distinguished, but so unjoyous, as the Lord Advocate, Lord Melville, the Provost, the Sheriff, and Lord Playfair. But he never altogether forgot Lord Playfair's lectures, which he regularly attended, on the composition and working of iron ore. They imparted to him a certain liking for practical science and its votaries which he never wholly lost. His literary relaxation at this time was confined to an abridgement of Gibbon, and Schmitz's "History of the Middle Ages."

The King often used to say that his University life at Oxford and Cambridge had been a mistake. He imputed no blame to the Prince Consort for deciding that for the Prince of Wales to live the life of an ordinary undergraduate was impossible. He realized perfectly the immense difficulties of the problem which confronted his parents of wishing to give him the benefit of that higher education—in

its widest sense—which a University opens to her worthier sons, and at the same time to protect the Heir to the Throne from the familiarities—with their inevitable consequences—of undergraduate life.

The view of the Prince Consort cannot be better expressed than in his own words.

THE PRINCE TO THE DEAN OF CHRIST CHURCH.

"*Private and Confidential.*

"MY DEAR DEAN OF CHRIST CHURCH,

"Sir Charles Phipps has sent me on your letter. Before settling in my mind whether we could properly send the Prince of Wales to Oxford or Cambridge, it became necessary to know that he could be so placed there as to remain entirely master (or for his governor to remain so for him) of the choice of society which he might encounter or the young men he might wish or ought to associate with.

"*In college* this appeared to me almost impossible, and it was upon your suggesting that he need not live *in* college, and perhaps ought not to do so, and your pointing out the precedent of the Prince of Orange, that I thought the whole plan of a visit to the Univerities feasible.

"I should be very sorry if plans were now proposed which would endanger the foundation upon which I built, and the more I think of it, the more I see the difficulties of the Prince of Wales being thrown together with the other young men, and having to make his selection of acquaintances when so thrown together with them; an entirely separate establishment would alone enable him to do so with safety.

"(Signed) ALBERT.

"*October* 21, 1858."

King Edward, however, clearly as he realized the difficulty, used to say in later years that the real choice lay between a regular collegiate life and not going to the University at all. His preference would have been for the former alternative. One may, perhaps, be pardoned for adding that this opinion was delivered from a station so exalted, and a position so secure, that the dangers and risks which possibly were magnified by the Prince were possibly minimized by the King.

The anxieties of the Queen and Prince were very poignant, and their sense of the gravity of the moral and intellectual training of him who was to be King was so overwhelming that it undoubtedly added a heavy burden to the cares of State, which their correspondence and diaries reveal.

The following letter was written to Colonel Bruce—then acting as Governor to the Prince of Wales—by the Prince Consort after his first visit to his son at Oxford:

THE PRINCE TO COLONEL BRUCE.

"MY DEAR COLONEL BRUCE,

"I was much pleased with my visit yesterday, and glad to find the Prince so assiduous in his work, and giving his willing and best attention to Mr. Fisher.

"I must not conceal my disappointment, however, to find that, whilst we had hoped that the Prince would be able thoroughly to study the Law and Constitution with Mr. Fisher, and attend two lectures, one in History, the other in Chemistry, merely to enable him to follow a part of the public instruction of Oxford *besides*, the time and work

required to make these two lectures understood and profitable should swallow up the whole of the Prince's time. I do not blame him, for he is doing his best, and deserves praise for that; but it makes me terribly anxious for the future, and anxious that not a moment be lost of the few precious weeks which the Prince has for his studies.

"We cannot afford to lose whole days out of the week for amusements, or to trench upon the hours of study by social calls, which have always had, and naturally will always have hereafter, the greatest share of the Prince's attention and time. The only use of Oxford is that it is a place for *study*, a refuge from the world and its claims. It does not require, I am sure, my setting this forth particularly either to you or the Prince himself; but I have thought it my duty to refer once more to this topic, as you will have to make your decisions with regard to various invitations and expectations as to what social amusements the Prince might join in.

"The Prince will have to see his sister one day when she comes; will have his birthday, and afterwards hers, to celebrate with us. Here are already four or five days broken into, and three quite lost.

"With regard to the Prince's choice of society, you will have to use the greatest circumspection. You are aware of the principles which we have laid down after anxious reflection and much communication with the different Ministers of the day, who look, as we do, upon the Prince's life as a *public matter* not unconnected with the present and prospective welfare of the nation and the State. In whatever decisions you may communicate to the Prince he will recognize, therefore, the result of these determinations, and he will easily comprehend that his position and life *must* be different from that of the other undergraduates; that his belonging to a particular college even, which could

not be avoided, has another significance from what it bears in other young men's lives. He belongs to the whole University, and not to Christ Church in particular, as the Prince of Wales will always belong to the whole nation, and not to the Peerage, the Army, etc., etc., although he may form part of them; that he can, and ought never, to belong to party, or faction, or coterie, or closed society, etc.

"Private individuals have a right to form associations, and cast in their lot with them, as a mode of gaining a position in life. The Prince of Wales has his position ready made for him by the nation and the Constitution, and the nation has a clear and indisputable right to demand of him that he will make *that* use of this position for which it was given him—viz., for the general good and welfare of the *whole*. I think it not superfluous to mark this strongly, as it requires reflection beyond the Prince's years to apprehend the difference in the claims upon him and upon others.

"I trust you will give the Prince an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the distinguished men of the place, and give them in return the means of seeing the Prince. Your convivial meetings at dinner will give the best means for this. Mixing them with some of the young students will give variety and interest to the conversation, and do a favour to the young men, who have otherwise no means of meeting familiarly those from whom they expect to derive the benefit of education, and between whom and themselves habit and circumstances have placed unnecessary and hurtful barriers.

"I was very poorly yesterday evening after my return here, but am better this evening.

"This letter is for the Prince as well as for yourself, for he is now old enough to enter into the spirit and reasons for his guidance and not to

remain satisfied merely with conforming to the wishes of his parents.

"(Signed) ALBERT.

"WINDSOR CASTLE, 27/10/59."

King Edward was at a difficult age—the age when in men, as in young nations, the spirit of rebellion is hard to check, and when the hand of the parent in the one case, or the statesman in the other, requires to be both firm and light.

The boy of seventeen was passing through a phase quite unlike what the King afterwards became. Looking over some old letters, quite recently, from one of his tutors, the King found himself accused, when in his eighteenth year, of a "want of enthusiasm and imagination, and the absence or torpor of the poetical element," which he, not altogether justly, believed to have been always a correct diagnosis of his temperament. There was, however, a further passage in which complaint is made of his

"want of generosity, not simply generosity in giving, but generosity of sentiment and judgment, a want of toleration of difference of opinion and of imputation of honourable motives, a want of unsuspicion of mean ones, and of a readiness to give rather than to take advantage, his position enabling him to do the former with grace and dignity whilst he may yet do the latter with impunity."

The King said of this passage, quite gravely, that it was perfectly true.

We have seen in the letters of his old governess

curious traits of the boy Prince which were very characteristic of King Edward, but nothing could resemble less the most generous-hearted and generous-minded of Monarchs than this description of his pupil by the King's favourite tutor. Every one of these traits upon which the writer put his finger in 1858 was not only corrected in the King, half a century later, but replaced by its entire opposite.

No man was ever less prone to attribute mean motives, no man ever showed less resentment or *rancune*. Not only did he give his confidence to those whom he thus honoured, with singular unsuspicion, but he forgave neglect and even an injury almost too readily—if forgiveness can be too generously granted. Bitterness he never felt, and anger which he did feel was never long sustained. The King's placability was wonderful, and nothing endeared him more to those about him than that sweet-blooded nature which made him ready at all times, when free from momentary anger, to give those of whom he disapproved the benefit of a right motive and of the best intention. In the truest sense of the phrase he was a most Christian King.

Upon the King's religious and domestic life it would be impertinent even to touch lightly.

The atmosphere in which his youth was passed is well known. From the simple faith of those who prayed together on the day of his christening King Edward never swerved.

A letter from the Prince to the Prince of Wales, written on July 14, 1858, has been preserved.

THE PRINCE TO THE PRINCE OF WALES.

"MY DEAR BERTIE,

"Mr. Gibbs has reported to me your wish to take the Sacrament next Sunday at Mortlake at an early service, together with Major Lindsay and Mr. Tarver, who appear to have the intention of doing so on their own account. Whilst that wish, if it springs from the deep feelings of the heart to draw nearer to the Lord and to seek support in the struggle with the weak human nature, and not from a mere love of imitating what other people may do —does you the greatest honour, it may be right for me to tell you upon what the practice is based, which your father and mother have established for themselves, and followed after mature reflection, upon a subject of great difficulty and importance for the Christian.

"There are two extremes of opinion, the one that the Sacrament is a means of grace working by its mere acceptance, and which ought not to be refused whenever it is offered, such a refusal being, in a stronger sense, not unlike the incivility to decline an invitation in ordinary life. It is termed ingratitude to God, and a casting off of His helping hand. People holding to this opinion take the Sacrament every Sunday when it is given.

"The other extreme bases its refusal to take the Sacrament except in rare instances, upon the dangers resulting from unworthy participation, which are strongly pointed out by St. Paul. Whilst the first run the risk of profaning and rendering unimpressive one of the great means to strengthen good resolutions, confessing sins, and starting afresh in life, the second run the risk of never finding that moment of fit preparation for which they are

waiting, and losing altogether the blessing of the Sacrament.

"We have agreed upon taking it twice a year, and have selected as fixed periods, times at which the history of the Gospel and the Church festivals prepare us, and induce us to additional sanctity, and at which we are sure not to be broken in upon by the gaieties of society, or demands of business —Christmas and Easter, as during these festivals everybody is at home with his family.

"We have chosen to take it, away from and undisturbed by the multitude who would stop for the show, if we were to remain in a public church after the service, and we have chosen the early morning as a time when the mind is still fresh, and not fatigued, nor the attention diminished by the lengthy previous service; we remain the previous day, and the day itself, as quiet as possible.

"Now, as our son, you would do well to keep to the example and practice of your parents, first because they have had more time and means to arrive at a just conclusion of what is best to be done in so important a matter, and secondly, because a different practice followed by the son implies a disagreement in feeling between them, if not a declaration on the part of the latter that he thought the former wrong.

"Any division in the Royal Family gives the whole of the public the right to criticize, to take part for the one side, and the other side, and so injure both.

"I return to the present case. If you feel a real yearning of the heart, go by all means, as the place is a retired one; the service will, I believe, be at eight o'clock in the morning, when there will be very few people present, and your life at the Lodge has been so private a one as not to have disturbed you.

"If the subject is indifferent to you, and your

wish has been only a light one, do not unnecessarily break through our rule, knowing now the reasons upon which this rule depends.

"Show this letter to Mr. Gibbs.

"Ever,

"(Signed) ALBERT.

"OSBORNE, 1858."

Did any father write to his seventeen-year-old son a letter upon such a subject more full of simple piety, and more imbued with the spirit of the Protestant faith?

Among the influences of his youth upon his maturer age it is impossible to overlook the journeys at home and oversea upon which so much thoughtful care was expended. His first trip, to the English lakes and to Scotland, with a few boy friends, was recorded by the Prince of Wales in his journal, as were others which followed. These journals were a source of some trouble to their author. His father thought them meagre. In point of fact they are boyish and simple records of the day's doings. "The first Prince of Wales visiting the Pope" suggested to the analytical mind of the Prince Consort, who so described it, thoughts and ideas which he desired to see reflected, however dimly, in that of his son. He was disappointed. Description is there, but in the cant of the schools, no subjectivity. On the other hand, there exists a letter written by Sir Henry Bulwer, then the representative of the Queen at Constantinople, to Lord John Russell, giving an account of a visit paid by

the Prince of Wales in the month of January immediately after the death of the Prince Consort, which would have been read by that Prince of high ideals and lofty standards with unmixed satisfaction.

The following is an extract:

Received January 22, 1862.

"But what pleased and struck me more than all, I must say, was our Prince's own manner. He is always remarkably easy and knows perfectly how to make those little speeches which princes are called upon to have so frequently upon their lips. But this was not all; before arriving at the breakfast, I just gave his Royal Highness a little insight into the Sultan's character, and the things to say that would please him. The manner in which he took advantage of those hints surprised me. The oldest diplomatists could not have succeeded better, or in my belief as well. Every point was touched so lightly, so naturally, and this produced on me the greater impression; since a man cannot have tact merely in one thing. If it is developed by circumstances one day, it is likely to be equally developed by circumstances in action another day. I should say, in short, that the Prince of Wales kept for two or three years in good hands and managed with skill (it requires perhaps some skill), her Majesty will be proud of, and happy in him. I do not think he will study much or learn much from books, but he will attain all that is practically necessary for him to know by observation and use it with address.

"I saw several instances of a kind heart and of good sense; but there are two extremes, I should say, to be avoided with him—severity, which would tend to bring out obstinacy; and flattery, which

would naturally tend to encourage presumption or over self-confidence.

"But I believe that praise well bestowed when it is *really* merited would tend very much to form the Prince's character, and fix it steadily in a proper course.

"I have observed also that the wisest way with him is never to maintain any argument at the time about this thing or that thing being the best to do, but simply to state an opinion, and if that opinion is the right one, I have seen him always end after a little in coming round to it.

"All these observations are formed on trifles, but, still, the subject is so interesting a one that I thought you would like to hear from me *confidentially* upon it, and as the happiness of our nation, and also of our afflicted Queen, depends so much on what her eldest son may turn out, this gives an additional importance to the question.

"My opinion, I confess, is, on the whole, a very favourable one. If H.R.H. is cleverly dealt with now, I do not think he will cause either her Majesty or the nation *any* anxiety. If he is not, he may for a time do so; but even then I feel certain he would soon right himself, for there is a great fund of good about him. The danger is that through his easy manners (though they are quite dignified enough when necessary) and the desire to be amused, so natural to youth in general, he might get into the hands of some agreeable person who would not have the character and good sense to guide him, and might have a pride and vanity in leading him astray."

The diplomatist and experienced man of the world had not only gauged truly the character of the young Prince, echoing, as he does, the words of the tutor written with fuller knowledge, but he

foreshadows with singular and prophetic accuracy some of those high qualities which enabled King Edward to render the greatest service to his country, and have placed his fame upon an enduring foundation.

Sir Henry Bulwer had no means of foreshadowing, as others had, a gift which was remarkable in the King throughout the years of his mature manhood. Those who were about the Prince's person at Oxford noticed early the consummate ease with which he was able to put into striking and well-balanced phrase the matter of a public speech. He used often to say that he found elaborate preparation impossible, and that whenever he attempted to learn a speech by heart, he failed to deliver it.

His speeches were, save for their general ideas, delivered impromptu. The right words and phrases, whether in the English, French, or German languages, came naturally to his lips, and no one ever excelled him in the power of putting in musical cadence and perfectly chosen words sentiments of courteous welcome or graceful acknowledgment. Those who heard King Edward speak on august occasions can never forget the telling quality of his voice or the emotional dignity of his expression and manner.

The long years which intervened between his coming of age and his accession, years occupied with social duties but deprived of political activities, full of enforced amusement rather than of practical business, were possibly the real source of

his influence and one of the secrets of his success. It is a serious difficulty in a constitutional monarchy such as ours that no adequate place is provided for the Heir Apparent to the Throne. Of social engagements and ceremonial opportunities, it is true that many were found to occupy the time of the Prince of Wales, and he never shrank from the performance of these duties, however dolorous and heavy.

The prolonged seclusion of the Queen after the death of the Prince Consort increased in number and importance the popular functions which were thrown upon the shoulders of the Prince of Wales. He bore the burden lightly, and in very debonair fashion. His real love of humanity, his unbored nature, his delight in movement, and his easy grace of manner and speech, rendered facile to him obligations from which so many public men and Sovereigns are known to shrink. He thoroughly enjoyed society, whether in the great houses in which he and the Princess were received as more than welcome guests, or at public entertainments, where his genial manners and hearty love of fellowship captivated men of all shades of politics, and of every religious or social persuasion.

No one was ever less of an eclectic than King Edward. All through his life he accepted men and women for what they were, and although he showed preferences, and inclined more to some forms of social entertainment than to others, he never encouraged social cliques or ostracized any man

from the circles in which he moved because of opinions or because of his tastes. Like Queen Victoria, he disliked backbiters and scandal-mongers, and never accepted rumour as a decisive factor in estimating the character of others, but first required proof.

But the King liked a good story, and could tell one with admirable gusto and without the slightest loss of dignity.

Cut off by the experiences of his position from active political interests, he never lowered himself by lending his countenance to political intrigue. Queen Victoria, standing aloof as she did from the bustling world, absorbed by her profound sense of the semi-divine duties imposed upon her by Providence, rejecting the idea that she was entitled to share her higher responsibilities even with her eldest son, and encouraged to hold this view by the experiences of the House of Hanover and by the advice of her Ministers, who had no wish to widen the area of counsel, undoubtedly isolated the Prince of Wales from public affairs, and threw him, not always uncriticized and unblamed, upon amusements and resources which were held by grave men to be unworthy of his abilities and of his high position. The Turf, the Theatre, and "Society" in the narrower sense of this term claimed, many thought, an undue share of his time and attention. Serious men were often in doubt whether the Prince of Wales would ever fill even with conventional decorum that high place in the regard of

British subjects all over the face of the world which was occupied by the venerated Queen, who had so long sat most regally upon the throne. When the Queen died, if any of those in closer contact with King Edward nourished misgivings, they were dissolved in twenty-four hours.

Not only were the Privy Councillors and citizens of London, who were present in the Banqueting-Hall of St. James's Palace on January 23, 1902, moved to admiration by the noble words—written by the King's own unguided hand—in which he announced his determination, so long as there was breath in his body, to work for the good and amelioration of his people, but those who stood nearer to him still, and were for the succeeding days in close touch with the labours of State as they accumulated hour by hour at Marlborough House, realized immediately that in Edward VII. the country had come into possession of a great monarch. So far from his previous life, with its want of concentrated energy, with its so-called frivolities, and with what men always prejudiced and sometimes insincere call its ceremonial inanities, proving an obstacle to kingship, the sheer humanity of it had left him unscathed of soul, and most extraordinarily well equipped for dealing with the gravest problem with which a Sovereign has to deal, that is to say, the eternal problem of making good use of the average man. Few have equalled and certainly no one has ever surpassed King Edward in handling, not dexterously, because the word implies

overconsciousness, but with grace past understanding, his fellow-man.

Whether it was a Radical politician or a foreign statesman, a man embittered by neglect or one of Fortune's favourites, an honest man or a villain, no one ever left the King's presence without a sense of his own increased importance in the worldly scale of things. It was this power of raising a man in his own estimation, which was the mainspring of the King's influence. His varied intercourse with men of all sorts and conditions, his preference for objective rather than for subjective teaching, as his old tutor said of him in boyhood, and his frank interest in the affairs of others had taught him the most profound and the oftenest ignored of all platitudes, that the vast majority of men are good, and that no man is wholly evil.

Where the simpler forms of monarchy prevail and where power is vested in the ruler by organic laws, and is exercised by the brutal "sic volo sic jubeo" methods of a cruder civilization, its exercise is a comparatively simple thing. Anyone can govern in a state of siege. The Constitution of our Empire, with its delicate checks and balances, held together by tradition and sentiment rather than by immutable laws, demands from its Head qualities which King Edward possessed in the highest degree. Our Constitution withholds power from the Sovereign, but it clothes him with an influence which in the hand of King Edward was highly potent, and, altogether exercised in quite a different

fashion, was as powerful as that which was exercised throughout her long and glorious reign by Queen Victoria.

It was in the exercise of this influence that the King's love and knowledge of his fellow-men, his genial temper, consummate tact, and complete freedom from rancour or sustained resentment, clothed him with an undisputed authority greater, because far more subtle, than autocratic power would have given him. The pre-eminent men, politicians, religious and social leaders, foreign statesmen, and the most distinguished of his Colonial subjects, who came into contact with him, never left his presence without a desire, in so far as in them lay, to meet his wishes.

Queen Victoria's influence was, during the latter half of her reign, based upon her profound experience and recognized freedom from personal aims, her firm grasp of the constitutional principle which governs a limited monarchy and her wonderful instinct for gauging the feelings of the serious middle class which was predominant in political England throughout her reign. Her personal contact with her subjects was so rare that it was practically non-existent.

Very few out of the millions of her people, notwithstanding the Jubilees of 1887 and 1897, had ever seen the Queen, and her interviews with her most prominent and most powerful servants were of rare occurrence. Nearly the whole of the State business, with which she was so largely identified,

was carried on by correspondence. The advice given to her, when a girl Queen, by the King of the Belgians, to have every request for a decision in writing, and to take time to consider, was followed by the Queen to the day of her death. The system had enormous advantages, but it also had its drawbacks. While it undoubtedly led, on many grave occasions, to wise reconsiderations of hasty ministerial action, it often harassed hard-worked Ministers, and sometimes led to unfortunate delays.

King Edward's methods were in direct contrast to these. He was always accessible to his Ministers, and far more than half of the business transacted by the King was transacted orally, by personal interview. He enjoyed putting questions to his Ministers, and he liked to state his own views, not in a formal document, but face to face with those whom the matter concerned. It is true that he fortified himself for these interviews by frequently instructing his private secretaries to make enquiries, or to remonstrate against public acts or speeches of which he disapproved. But, in the long-run, the King himself had his say, and, unlike Queen Victoria, he had his say verbally. It is certain that in saving time and in minimizing "friction" these methods were superior to those of the previous reign.

At the same time, if, in view of the brilliant success achieved by King Edward, a criticism is not out of place, it is, perhaps, pardonable to doubt whether, on such an occasion, if such had arisen, as

that of the "Trent affair," when the Prince Consort's direct amendment of a Foreign Office despatch composed a most dangerous difference between Great Britain and the United States, the more methodical plan of obtaining from Ministers reasoned statements on paper of their policy would not have proved to be an extra security for the maintenance of peace, which was always King Edward's chief concern.

To attempt anything approaching to biography, or even to try to examine critically the reign of King Edward, is impossible here. Even analysis of the influence of the King upon Society and public affairs, if it goes beyond the obvious, is treading upon ground hedged in by the sanctity of recent loss. All that has been attempted in these pages is to place in harmonious contrast the boy Prince and the King as all his people knew him. Lord Rosebery has called King Edward *Le Roi Charmeur*. All the civilized world has called him the "Peacemaker." His people have grasped his ideal, and Lord Rosebery has indicated his method. A nobler epitaph no Sovereign could desire.

Personal charm is indefinable. It is also a most potent weapon, and a dangerous one in the hands of the unscrupulous. King Edward's charm was invincible. The individual man succumbed to it, and the multitude went down before it. When the King walked into a room everyone felt the glow of a personal greeting. When he smiled upon a vast assemblage everyone responded unconsciously.

On the Derby day, when the King raised his hat to the immense concourse of his people, his salutation reached the heart of every man and woman. This gift was priceless to him. The fact is that, just as their hearts went out to him, his heart went out to them, and they knew it. There was not an atom of pose about the King. If he visited the most mighty potentate, if he called upon a humble subject, if he went into a cottage garden, he was—and this may seem exaggerated, although it is the simple truth—equally interested and pleased. His joyous sense of life, his broad sympathies, and his complete freedom from ennui, made him genuinely pleased with the lives and homes of others. He was interested. It was no perfunctory sense of politeness, it was no conscious desire to please, which made him note details and suggest improvements or alterations in a strange house or garden. He would say to his host, "You should cut or plant a tree here," or he would say to a cottager, "Don't you think that flower-bed would look better so, or that fence would be better in such and such a position?" and he would add, "I shall see whether you have done so when next I come," and the effect upon the mind of his hearer was that he really cared. And he did really care. That was the wonderful thing, and it was also the irresistible charm.

This personal magnetism, which won the hearts of everyone with whom he came into contact and of millions who never saw him, was a national

asset worth more to us in our King than the military genius of a Napoleon or the diplomatic gifts of a Metternich, because of its more abiding quality and more permanent results.

King Edward, like his mother before him, has exalted the standard of monarchical government, and shown to all the world the enormous value of the personal factor of the Head of the State under political institutions which leave the people free to make their own laws and to administer them.

The pomp and pageantry of kingship, sometimes decried, were in his hands always used for the State service, and never for personal display. The King lived more simply than many of his wealthy subjects. He liked comfort and even luxury, but he disliked waste. So marked was his repugnance that those about his person often noted it with surprise, but the reason was the sense of his kingship and of the poverty of millions of his subjects surging up within him.

It was another illustration of his personal charm, instinctive and unthought out, but singularly potent.

No one ever possessed a keener sense of proportion. The examples of this almost supreme gift in one so highly placed are too numberless to mention, and, besides, in order to make the point most effective, it would be necessary to describe actions and analyze motives quite beyond the scope of these pages.

The King's retentive and well-ordered memory,

not only of names and faces—for that has often been the subject of remark—but of the obscure ramifications of world-wide events, and not least his mastery of anecdote, made him one of the best conversationalists in Europe. It is also one of the main causes of his influential judgment upon political affairs. In his presence much of the ordinary kind of knowledge, mere information, was apt to drop into unimportance. The things he knew seemed majestic and significant, and common learning appeared a mere accomplishment. Lord Beaconsfield had noticed much the same quality in the talk of Queen Victoria.

No attempt has been made in these pages to give a dispassionate and detailed survey of the character of King Edward, and still less of his reign. Our loss is too recent, and our perspective too obscured. Like other mortals, our King had his failings, but what benefit has ever accrued to mankind by taking note of the failings of great men? And King Edward was beyond all question in the category of the great. Character, strong, firm, and brave in quality, is the true test of greatness. These gifts were inherited by the King from both his parents, and his upbringing tended to enhance their virtue. To throw some light upon the value to Great Britain and her dominions oversea of a monarchy thrice blessed in a Sovereign thus bred and trained, was the main intention of these pages. If the nation owes a debt of gratitude to Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort for having given

us King Edward, in like manner, as years roll on, it will be seen that the King has given us in his son, to whom he was tenderly devoted and of whose virtue, modesty, and high abilities he was so justly proud, a successor not less worthy of admiration and respect.

KING EDWARD VII. AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS.*

In the course of the eloquent panegyric pronounced by Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons upon King Edward, he said that the King was not a dexterous diplomatist, he was a great Monarch.

If by a dexterous diplomatist Mr. Balfour meant the man who attaches subtle meaning to the wording of a Protocol, or who employs finesse to achieve his legitimate ends, the King was certainly no diplomatist. That he was a great Monarch, no one will now or ever dispute. But if by diplomacy is meant a rapid grasp of large international issues, the subordination of the lesser to the greater factors of imperial questions, and the art of winning assent to the material point at issue, then the King was a great diplomatist. In affairs of European or world-wide moment, as in all else, he had a marked sense of proportion. It was difficult to interest him in the petty questions over which chancelleries squabble, and which form the staple of ordinary diplomatic pourparlers. His attention, however, was consistently given to the balance of naval and military power, and especially

* Appeared in the *Deutsche Revue*, 1910, and is translated from the German.

to the commercial struggles which of late years have so largely eclipsed the older forms of national rivalry.

The popular idea, outside the British Isles, that King Edward moulded the Foreign policy of his country is of course pure illusion.

Once or twice in a century, the policy of a great nation is determined by the theories or by the action of a statesman. Such men were Cavour and Bismarck. But as a rule the force that drives one nation towards unity, another towards revolution, and another towards expansion, comes from the necessities of a people influenced by the conditions under which it is striving for existence. This has been called the force of destiny. Napoleon pretended to believe himself to be in a high degree a man of destiny, but King Edward was too sane, and his rôle as a constitutional Sovereign too plainly set before him, for any such fantasy to take possession of his mind. He always recognized that to initiate the policy of Great Britain was the business of Ministers for the time being, and his function was to criticize or approve it, and finally to support it with all his powers. This he performed with such clearness of vision and supreme tact as to command not only the gratitude of his own people, but the admiration of competent judges all over the civilized world.

The leaders of both political parties in the State found in him not only a powerful ally, but an indefatigable and quite invincible protagonist of

their policy abroad. The Foreign policy of the Ministry of the day was in his eyes—as under a Constitutional Government it must be assumed to be—the policy of the nation, and therefore the settled policy of the Sovereign. It never occurred to him to waver or look back. His mental attitude bore a strong resemblance to that of his august mother. If ever the complete correspondence of Lord Beaconsfield is made public, it will be seen that during the eventful years 1876 to 1878, the consistency of Great Britain's attitude in the Eastern question was largely due to the influence and pertinacity of Queen Victoria, quite as much as to the inflexibility of her Prime Minister, harassed as he was by a vacillating Cabinet. Queen Victoria had nothing to do with the choice of the policy pursued towards Russia during those years. In fact, when that policy was initiated the Queen was more than doubtful of its soundness from the point of view of morality and of the national interests of her country. When, however, the nation, and she herself, by the action of her Ministers, had been committed to it, she could not comprehend the minds of those who had accepted it in principle, and subsequently shrank from its practical application. She supported over and over again the drooping right arm of her Prime Minister. If the Prince of Wales, as King Edward was in those days, had been permitted to take part in great political affairs, he would have followed suit, for when it became a question of national con-

sistency, or of carrying through a policy upon which the nation had embarked, the King's views were the views of Queen Victoria. Moral and physical courage have always been characteristic of his House, and both qualities loomed large in him.

It has been whispered in corners of the Press that the domestic political crisis of last autumn* hastened the death of the King. If this belief is genuinely held, the men who hold it little knew King Edward. It would have taken something more than an opportunist Radical Government to kill the King. Much the same foolish gossip gained currency when Queen Victoria died. It was said that she had succumbed to the anxieties of the "Black Week" in the winter of 1899-1900. The Queen, although she may have had anxious moments, never wavered in her firm conviction that the South African War would end victoriously for her army, and King Edward on his part never doubted that he could adequately and successfully cope with the domestic crisis which his Ministers threatened to create for him. He may have been annoyed, but he was never cowed, and he felt perfect reliance upon his capacity to gauge the sentiments of the majority of his people, quite irrespective of casual majorities in the House of Commons.

In home affairs and in foreign politics the keynote of King Edward's temperament was courage. It would be a grave error, however, to suppose

* 1909.

that there were strong combative elements in his nature. He was not only a Peace-maker, but a Peace-lover. Just as he disliked scenes and quarrels in private life, he hated animosities between political parties, and deplored the armed rivalry of nations. But he was before everything else a patriot and a King; and in both these capacities he was, in duty bound, constrained to look to the honour and safety of the nation over which he ruled.

He was, therefore, at one with the majority of his people in his desire to see the naval forces of Great Britain maintained at the highest point consistent with their use for defensive purposes and for securing the inviolability of British soil. No further thought, no sinister design, was ever harboured in his mind. Least of all did the King look with any feeling of jealousy, resentment or alarm upon the growing strength of the great German Empire. In this matter he represented, not the nervous apprehension of a few fanatics, but the sane conviction of the vast majority of Britons, that within the four corners of the world there is ample room for Great Britain and Germany.

King Edward had been reared in the belief that Europe and the world at large would be all the better, and none the worse, for the unification of Germany under Prussian leadership. This idea always haunted his father, one of whose ablest State Papers, written in 1847, is devoted to the

consideration of the problem of how to combine the establishment of popular forms of government in German States with a United Germany.

Lord Palmerston, to whom the memorandum in question was shown, wrote in reply: "England and Germany have naturally a direct interest in assisting each other to become rich, united and strong, and there ought not to be, in the mind of any enlightened man of either country, any feeling of jealousy as to the progress made by the other country in civilization and prosperity."

A strong and united Germany under the leadership of Prussia had been the lifelong dream of Baron Stockmar, and thanks to his influence Queen Victoria and Prince Albert had placed this fundamental idea in the forefront of their conception of that new Europe which was about to arise out of the ashes of the European fires lighted in 1848. Among these influences, and subjected to the unconscious perusal of these conceptions, King Edward's boyhood was passed. They never wholly left him. The absurd Press campaigns in Great Britain and in Germany, carried on by men with honest and patriotic intentions, but ignorant and misguided, saddened and annoyed him. He disliked exaggeration, and detested mischief-making. His mind was singularly free from insular prejudice. He never yielded for a moment to the feeling of panic, and was unmoved by the loud-toned declamation of those who read nothing but sinister menace in the legitimate strengthening of their armaments by the great Powers of the world.

On the other hand, no one was more determined than he that no stone should be left unturned to render the defensive forces of his own country powerful and efficient, for he was aware that the immunity of the British Empire from attack is the greatest safeguard of that European Peace which was the main preoccupation of his later years.

King Edward was far too shrewd, his knowledge of the world was too profound, and his appreciation of the conditions of European commercial rivalry too keen, not to realize fully the true meaning of the efforts of the German Kaiser and the German people to strengthen the German fleet, and to broaden the scope of German colonial enterprise. He was acquainted with eminent business men of all nationalities, and he was intimately conscious of the novel conditions of that international commercial struggle for the open markets of the world which was slowly but surely taking the place of the somewhat aimless national rivalries of the years immediately following the making of the German Empire and the kingdom of Italy. When his attention was drawn to a remarkable little book, "Europe's Optical Illusion," which created some stir in England, and which was brought to the notice of the German Emperor and of the Crown Prince by English friends, the King seemed perfectly familar with its main thesis, that is to say the midsummer madness, from the point of view of either nation, of a war between Germany and Great Britain. Victory to either nation would spell disaster for both. The idea to

him was almost a commonplace. At the same time, he thought disarmament, or limitation of armaments, under existing conditions, purely visionary, and never could understand how any reasonable human being could believe that he had proposed either course to the German Emperor. The legend seems to have lingered in certain ill-balanced minds to this day, in spite of its inherent impossibility and notwithstanding the plainest denials. No one could be long in the vicinity of King Edward without discovering that he liked Germany and the German people. No one could have watched the King and the Kaiser together, without noticing that the two men, in spite of difference in temperament, and divergence of ideals, bore a curious likeness to each other, that blood is thicker than water, and that not only mutual respect, but real admiration underlay their intercourse.

There are some who recall that in January, 1910, the King mentioned with grave emotion that he had written warmly to the Emperor on his birthday, expressing a strong wish that Germany and England should always work together in the interests of European Peace, which acting together they can always ensure. Perhaps the Emperor, when only a few weeks later he stood side by side with King George in the Hall of William Rufus, where the Great Dead lay in state, remembered that friendly letter and the noble aspiration it contained.

In former days fleets and armies were a menace.

In these days powerful fleets and well-trained armies are the best guarantees of peace. Is there any German of candid soul and perspicuous mind who, if he were an Englishman, would not spend every hour of his working day in pressing for the maintenance of that naval supremacy upon which the safety of the British Empire so largely depends? Is there any German who, if he were an Englishman, would not desire to see two British keels laid down to every one of the next strongest European Power?

Is there any German who, if he were an Englishman, would not feel that Great Britain with her vast responsibilities to humanity in half-civilized lands, her immense seaboard, her population dependent upon foreign imports, and without a national army, floats on the navy, and that her navy must therefore be supreme?

And is there any Englishman who, if he were a German, would not ardently desire to see the German Fleet so strong that the full force of German opinion should have its proper weight and value in the counsels of Europe and in the polity of the world, and that at sea as on land German honour should be safe?

These are not conditions of petty rivalry, but of mutual honour and respect. They are the views of all rational Englishmen and Germans, and they were the views of King Edward.

There must, however, be no mistake. It is ridiculous to suppose, as some do, that the King initiated or planned the Entente between

Great Britain and France. He was too keenly alive to the proper functions of a constitutional Sovereign. But he cordially accepted and enthusiastically supported the policy of two successive Secretaries of State on different sides in politics (Lord Lansdowne and Sir Edward Grey), and three Prime Ministers (Mr. Balfour, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Mr. Asquith) who have consistently advocated the Entente, with France, and have obtained for their policy the approval of Englishmen of all classes. And why? Not out of hostility to Germany, or to any other Great Power. But because France is to-day, as she has ever been, the keynote of European Peace. You have to go back beyond the reign of Charlemagne to find any really great and vital European struggle in which France was not engaged. There have been wars, of course, from which France stood aloof, but they have not been great wars. Because of her geographical position, because of her inexhaustible wealth, and because of the martial spirit of her people, France always struck, and strikes still, the most vibrant note in the Concert of Europe.

King Edward not only felt a real and deep affection for France and for the French people, but he was in cordial agreement with his own people all over the Empire in their strong sense of the inestimable value to Europe and the world of the Entente between Great Britain and France. There is, however, not an English patriot worthy of the name who does not look forward anxiously to the day when this friendly league, based upon the

peaceful aspirations of vast masses of the common people, may include the mighty German Empire.

The *status quo* of Northern and Central Europe guaranteed by the Great Powers! Think what this would mean! It is surely not an unthinkable proposition. The present grouping of the Powers renders such a dream more easy and not more difficult of fulfilment. If three Powers can be grouped, why not combine for one purpose, and in the common interest, two groups of three each? That is the simple and not very daring proposition, and it certainly is not beyond the limits of reasonable expectation to assume that the common sense of civilized nations under august and imaginative leadership will one day bring about this consummation so devoutly to be wished.

Ten years ago the idea of an Anglo-French Entente was an almost unthinkable proposition. At the time of the "Dogger Bank incident," what Englishman or Russian could contemplate as a near probability a friendly understanding between Great Britain and Russia? Yet this unthinkable combination and improbable amity have been achieved by careful statesmanship, unswayed by the wild talk of post-prandial politicians.

If the psychological moment can be seized, and if impulsive sentimental minds can put aside traditional enmities and face the actualities of the world to-day, its burdens on rich and poor alike, and the dangers to civilization from brutal forces long dormant but symptomatically awakening, the hope of accommodation between France and Ger-

many and Great Britain, based on their common interests, need not be far from fulfilment.

The unity of States speaking the same language and of the same race was the Imperial idea which prompted great statesmen in the nineteenth century to supreme effort. It bore fruit in three great struggles, followed by long periods of peace, which almost seem to justify the bloodshed and the misery out of which peace sprang. With this idea is linked for ever the memorable names of the Emperor William and those of that galaxy of warrior-statesmen who were gathered round him; also of Abraham Lincoln in the United States of America, and of Victor Emmanuel and Cavour in Italy.

The equally glorious but wholly pacific idea of the early days of the twentieth century is the grouping of great Powers for the purpose of maintaining what is called the *status quo*, and of mutually guaranteeing to each other and to the smaller States of Europe their territorial integrity.

This idea, germinating years ago in the Triple Alliance, fructifying in the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, and once more in the Triple Entente, is ripe for further development.

With this policy, liberal, progressive, and yet eminently conservative, and noble because of its pacific tendencies, its unselfish aspects, and its aspirations for the future of mankind, must ever be connected the name of King Edward VII. of Great Britain and Ireland, who presided, if not over its inception, over its partial triumph.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS.*

I.

I READ once a very brilliant book on the condition of England by Mr. C. F. G. Masterman. He is a member of Mr. Asquith's Government. The book is brilliant and satisfactory, inasmuch as it reveals the noteworthy fact that among "rising politicians" there is one whose trend of mind and intellectual equipment are in the old and grand manner, not common in these days.

A chapter in which Mr. Masterman lays bare the virtues and foibles of a class whom he calls the "Conquerors" contains the following passage:

"The rather ignoble rôle played by the House of Lords during the past decade reveals its weaknesses. It will allow changes which it profoundly dislikes when compelled by fear. It will resist changes in action when that fear is controlled. It will altogether abandon the effort to initiate changes where change is essential. It can do little but modify, check, or destroy other men's handiwork. It has no single constructive suggestion of its own to offer to a people confronting difficult problems and harassed by the obligations of necessary reorganizations. It can neither breed leaders nor ideas."

* These letters appeared in the *Times*, during a period extending from December, 1909, to April, 1910.

I can imagine that every Radical politician reading this passage would give to it unqualified assent. It is intended as a condemnation of the House of Lords; and yet, if we admit the description to be true, what more could the most exacting reformer demand from a Second Chamber?

The House of Lords yields, says the writer, when "compelled by fear." What fear? The honourable fear that it may be running counter to the will of the nation. There is nothing else of which the House of Lords has reason to be afraid.

It "resists changes when that fear is controlled," or, in other words, if it suspects, as in the case of Home Rule, that the nation is unsympathetic or hostile, it resists the proposed change. Is not that the principal function of a Second Chamber?

It "abandons the effort to initiate," which implies that, like the House of Commons, in these days it leaves initiative in legislation to the Executive Government.

"It can do little but modify, check, or destroy other men's handiwork." Are not these precisely the functions which every constitutional writer assigns to a Second Chamber, and all framers of Constitutions have specifically assigned to it?

"It has no constructive suggestion" to offer. No more, in these days, has the House of Commons, if by that is meant large constructive measures of legislation. These are invariably the work of Government departments or of an indi-

vidual Minister, who may or may not be a member of the House of Lords.

The Budget of 1909 undoubtedly was the constructive effort of a member of the House of Commons. But to what Minister is due the chief credit for the Constitution for South Africa? With the latter the House of Commons had nothing whatever to do. With the former it had undoubtedly much, but all in the direction of "modification, check, and destruction" of the Bill in its original form. Yet no blame appears to attach to the Opposition for amending Mr. Lloyd George's Bill.

As to the incapacity of the House of Lords to "breed leaders" or "ideas," that is largely a matter of opinion. The test of leadership, however, is not loud-sounding brass, or a waving sword, but the art of getting men to follow.

The leadership of the Peers is attested not only in the higher regions of statesmanship for the last hundred years, but in every domain of statesmanship, and in every county council, in every county association, and (when they have chosen) in many of the borough councils of the United Kingdom.

The test of ideas is not their originality but their weight. Novel ideas, like cleverness, are becoming a drug in the market. The ideas of the late Duke of Devonshire—and they were often quite dull—were more acceptable to his countrymen than those of the most brilliant of his contemporaries.

What Mr. Masterman calls the "weaknesses" of

the House of Lords are the real sources of its strength, and of its hold upon the nation.

It represents, far more accurately than any great Liberal majority of the House of Commons, the fundamental conservatism of the English people, their wariness, their love of tradition, their adhesiveness to precedent, their denseness to "ideas," their habitual preference for the evils they understand and to which they are accustomed, their shrewd belief that the man who has something to keep is a safer guide than the man who has something to gain.

Ninety-nine times out of a hundred the average Englishman will pay more heed to an inarticulate Peer than to the greatest demagogue that ever trod a platform. No cheap sarcasm will account for this curious and, to some politicians, this unpalatable fact. It is an instinctive heritage of the Briton all over the world, and has its origin deep down in the history of our country.

If the conflict upon which the House of Lords has entered leads to its dissolution, history will say of it, that man for man it was more than the equal of the House of Commons, and that it responded as a rule more surely to the changing temper of the nation than the elected representatives of the people.

It would be absurd to contend that the House of Lords has never made mistakes. The rejection of the Budget was a mistake. But this and all previous errors of judgment have been amply

redeemed by the services which it has rendered by rejecting thoroughly vicious measures, and by altering and revising ill-considered ones.

The pretension of the House of Commons appears to be that because it is a popular Assembly it is infallible. No more grotesque caricature of political illusion can well be imagined. Its gravity lies in this, that the repeated assertion of this absurd dogma may catch the fleeting fancy of the people.

It is true that the right of the House of Lords to reject Money Bills has, like the veto of the Sovereign, long fallen into abeyance. To justify the acts of the Lords in reviving their dormant claim, it is necessary to show that we have arrived at a point in our history when the checks and balances of the Constitution require revision.

No one who has watched the vagaries of the House of Commons since the rise of the Irish party twenty-nine years ago, and has grasped the full import of the severance of the old Whigs from the Liberal party in the House of Lords twenty-three years ago, can doubt that the relations between the two Houses want readjusting.

To accept, however, the Liberal or the Unionist party view would be to misread the situation.

It may be a fact that the present composition of the House of Lords unfits it to fulfil adequately the functions of a Second Chamber. But it is far more true that the constitution of the House of Commons, its unwieldy size, its misrepresentative

character, its ludicrous over-representation of Ireland; its dangerous under-representation of the great centres of population, including London, its antiquated and unsystematic grouping, its fantastic rules of procedure, and its unbusinesslike habits, especially in dealing with estimates and expenditure, render a thorough examination and reform of the House of Commons an imperative condition of any constitutional change or of any readjustment of the joint powers or several privileges of the two Houses.

If we are to substitute a written for an unwritten Constitution, the draft cannot be prepared by the caucus of any political party, or amid the dust of a general election.

If the relations between the two Houses of Parliament, and possibly the prerogative of the Crown, are to be regulated by statute, the sanction and approval not only of one party will be required, not only of the majority of a House of Commons elected under a limited franchise, and a system of distributed voting power which is a mockery of true representation, but the acquiescence and agreement of all classes in the United Kingdom, whose interests have hitherto been safeguarded by the habit of compromise and the practice of reasonable give and take which have characterized the nation and have been the envy of statesmen all over the civilized world. I do not believe that we can escape from the present political deadlock without a political revolution. It will not be the

first in our history. Hitherto the British people have almost without exception conducted their revolutions according to the form of law, and by adhering to precedent. There need be no departure from this ancient practice if we look to the history of our own people, and to the expedients of our ancestors when confronted by similar difficulties.

II.

Precedent, like analogy, is rarely conclusive. If history is searched for an exact counterpart of the quarrel between the two Houses of Parliament, which came to a head with the rejection of the Budget of 1909, none will be found.

The quarrel apparently must end in one of two ways. Either the House of Lords will be strengthened by internal reform and an admittance to it of life peers, or its veto will become suspensory and its functions limited to criticism and suggestion.

If the partisans of the House of Lords are a majority of the nation, the constitutional question can be solved without revolutionary action, and the centre of political power—that is to say, the Government-making authority—will be transferred hereafter without much friction by gradual but inevitable process from the Commons to the Lords.

If, on the other hand, the majority of the nation support the Commons, a deadlock between the two Houses appears almost inevitable.

It is unlikely that the House of Lords will without a struggle abandon their rights; and no Bill

limiting their powers can become law without their assent.

There are only two ways of obtaining the assent of the House of Lords to a Bill they dislike. One is by persuading them to yield, and the other is by unconstitutional means—in other words by force.

The former method may tax all the resources of statesmanship, and may prove beyond the capacity of even the most adroit parliamentarian.

It is worth while, therefore, to consider the latter alternative.

The most obvious way of using force without proceeding to physical extremes is to stretch the Royal prerogative and to create enough peers to overthrow the existing majority of the House of Lords.

In the long history of our country this course has only once been followed.

In the winter of 1711, owing to circumstances which are not material, a sharp conflict arose between the House of Lords and the House of Commons. It was the eve of the Peace of Utrecht.

An amendment to the Address had been moved in both Houses to the effect that "no peace could be safe or honourable to Great Britain or Europe if Spain and the West Indies were allotted to any branch of the House of Bourbon." Parties were arrayed for and against the Duke of Marlborough. When it came to the vote the House of Commons rejected the amendment by 232 against 106, or a majority of 126 for Harley and his Government.

In the House of Lords the amendment was carried against the Government by a majority of eight.

No one appeared to doubt that the fate of the Ministers was sealed. Oxford and St. John abandoned all hope of remaining in office against the will of the House of Lords.

To Oxford and Bolingbroke, to Swift and Somers it never seemed to have occurred as a possible contingency that a Ministry could retain power, unless upon questions of capital importance it could count on the support of both Houses of Parliament.

What was to be done?

The Tory Minister soon discovered that Queen Anne had no objection to what a Tory historian calls "the most violent stretch of her prerogative."

On this knowledge the Ministers acted.

Lord Stanhope's description of the event is in the following words:

"Their first step was to strike down Marlborough. . . . So bold a stroke required another still bolder to sustain it. The same *Gazette* of December 31, 1711, which announced that the Queen had dismissed the Duke of Marlborough from all his employments, made known also the creation of twelve peers. By this *coup d'État* it was intended to overrule, or rather to invert, the majority of the Upper Chamber.

"It is the only time in our annals that a stretch of the prerogative in this direction has been actually effected, though not the only time that it has been threatened and intended."

Lord Stanhope was writing after the lapse of 160 years, and his view of the unconstitutional action

of Harley was not very different from that of Harley's contemporaries.

It is said by Bolingbroke's biographers that although the creation of twelve peers for the express purpose of swamping the Whig majority in the House of Lords suited his daring and impetuous nature, he was well aware that such a step, unprecedented in the constitutional history of England, could not be justified.

Afterwards, when in exile, St. John, in a letter to Sir W. Windham, spoke of the measure "as unprecedented and invidious, to be excused by nothing but the necessity, and hardly by that."

Swift, who had given up all hope of the Government retaining office, wrote rapturously to Stella on the evening upon which the *Gazette* was issued; but Bishop Burnet spoke soberly and sadly of the "indignity" which was put upon the House of Lords "since the Court did by this openly declare that they were to be kept in absolute submission and obedience."

Lord Dartmouth described what he called "so odious a course" in the following words:

"I was never so much surprised as when the Queen drew a list of twelve lords out of her pocket, and ordered me to bring warrants for them; there not having been the least intimation before it was to be put in execution. I asked her if she designed to have them all made at once. She asked me if I had any exceptions to the legality of it. I said, 'No'; but doubted very much of the expediency, for I feared it would have a very ill effect in the

House of Lords and no good one in the kingdom. She said she had made fewer lords than any of her predecessors, and I saw the Duke of Marlborough and the Whigs were resolved to distress her as much as they could, and she must do what she could to help herself. I told her I wished it proved a remedy to what she so justly complained of, but I thought it my duty to tell her my apprehensions, as well as execute her commands."

It was said at the time, and the opinion has been often endorsed, that the course taken by the Queen and Harley was justly condemned not only by the party which it overthrew, but by all intelligent friends of the Constitution.

St. John himself, in a dissertation on parties, speaking of the right of creating peers resident in the Crown, admits that this right would be "an intolerable one indeed, if the Crown should exercise it often as it hath been exercised sometimes with universal and most just disapprobation"; and he goes on to point out that if the Crown could "unmake as well as make peers, it would be a jest to talk of three estates, since there would be virtually and in effect but two."

It is a curious reflection on recent events to find Bolingbroke refusing to subscribe to these two sayings of Bacon—

"That England can never be undone unless by Parliaments; and there is nothing a Parliament cannot do—"

because, he continues,

"Great Britain, according to our present Constitution, cannot be undone by Parliaments, for there

is something which a Parliament cannot do. A Parliament cannot annul the Constitution."

This is, however, precisely what a parliament does if it brings by the action of its leaders the two Houses into so bitter a conflict that force, in some shape or other, has to be used.

If the Royal prerogative was unduly stretched, and if the Constitution of our country was violated by Queen Anne's creation of twelve peers, what would be said of a proposal to create five hundred? The decent conduct of public affairs, consideration for the noble traditions of our parliamentary history, respect for the good opinion of the King's dominions oversea, and regard for the high position which the British Parliament has always occupied in the eyes of foreign nations, appear to forbid recourse to so undignified an expedient. The solution of this difficult problem surely lies elsewhere.

In 1832 the threat of the Whig Lord Grey to follow the precedent of his Tory predecessors was not carried into effect, and the House of Lords yielded to the majority of the House of Commons.

In the readjustment of powers between the two Houses, which appears to be inevitable, the good sense of the nation, and the moderation of party leaders, as a rule so characteristic of Englishmen, when they have done talking and come to action, should find some way out of the impending deadlock other than that adopted by the revolutionary Administration of which Bolingbroke was the moving spirit.

III.

The deadlock between the two Houses of Parliament in 1832 was relieved by the submission of the House of Lords. What Bagehot called a catastrophic creation of peers for the purpose of swamping the House of Lords was only approached and never consummated.

It is frequently forgotten that, although William IV. gave an uncertain and lukewarm promise to Lord Grey that he would consent to the creation of a reasonable number of peers to pass the second reading of the Reform Bill, it became unnecessary to test the willingness of the King, as the second reading was passed by a majority of nine.

When subsequently the Bill was threatened by Lord Lyndhurst's amendment, the King refused leave to create peers, and a crisis followed, which almost led to a revolution.

Dates are important, in order to understand clearly what happened.

On May 8 the Government of Lord Grey resigned. On the 10th the House of Commons voted an Address to the King by a majority of eighty, praying him to call to his councils only such persons as would carry unimpaired the Reform Bill.

The Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst were trying meanwhile to form an Administration, but their efforts proved fruitless owing to the refusal of Sir Robert Peel to accept office.

This was the moment selected by Mr. Croker for stating his conviction that "Reform had no hold upon the public mind." This blindness of partisanship to the trend of events is further illustrated by the debate which took place on May 14 in the House of Commons on the presentation of a petition from the City of London, praying the House to withhold supplies till the Reform Bill should have passed.

It was towards the end of the debate that Mr. Baring, after, as it was supposed, consulting the leaders of the Tory party in the House of Lords, suggested that the breach between the King and his Ministers might not be irreparable, and that they might withdraw their advice to create a large number of peers if an assurance were given them, or there were a reasonable probability, that the House of Lords did really intend to pass Schedule A of the Bill. This was understood to imply an offer on the part of the Opposition to allow the Bill to pass provided peers were not created.

The King immediately wrote to Lord Grey, drawing this inference, and on May 16 a Cabinet minute was forwarded to the King:

"By the failure of the Duke of Wellington's endeavour to form a new Administration, and by the reference made by your Majesty to your present servants, they find themselves in a situation in many repects similar to that in which they were placed after the vote on Lord Lyndhurst's motion in the Committee of the House of Lords on Monday, the 7th inst.

"Your Majesty has been pleased to concur in the opinion submitted to your Majesty in Lord Grey's letter of yesterday, that it is necessary to pass the Reform Bill with as little delay as possible, unimpaired in all its principles and essential provisions, and as nearly as possible in its present form, in order to put an end to the agitation which now prevails; and also that your Majesty's servants cannot continue in their present situations without a sufficient security that they will have power to insure this result.

"The first question, therefore, to be considered is, how this security is to be obtained?

"In this view two modes only present themselves to your Majesty's servants—the one, a cessation, on the part of the adversaries of the Bill, of the opposition which has hitherto obstructed its progress; the other, such a creation of peers as should give your Majesty's servants sufficient power to overcome that opposition.

"The former of these alternatives appears to your Majesty's servants to be one on which it is impossible to come to any previous understanding or arrangement; to the other, your Majesty's servants are unwilling now, as they ever have been, to urge your Majesty to resort whilst the hope exists of finding any other means by which the Reform Bill may be carried unimpaired.

"Your Majesty's servants, therefore, humbly beg your Majesty's permission to defer till Friday any final answer to the letter which Earl Grey had yesterday the honour of receiving from your Majesty."

On the morning of May 17 the King sent the following circular letter to the Duke of Wellington and to many other peers:

SIR H. TAYLOR TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

"ST. JAMES'S PALACE,
"*May* 17, 1832.

"MY DEAR LORD DUKE,

"I have received the King's commands to acquaint your Grace that all difficulties and obstacles to the arrangement in progress will be removed by a declaration in the House of Lords this day, from a sufficient number of peers, that, in consequence of the present state of things, they have come to the resolution of dropping their further opposition to the Reform Bill, so that it may pass, as nearly as possible, in its present form.

"Should your Grace agree to this, as he hopes you will, his Majesty requests you will communicate on the subject with Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Ellenborough, and any other peers who may be disposed to concur with you.

"I have, &c.,
"H. TAYLOR."

A copy was sent to Lord Grey, with a covering letter to the effect that the King was prepared to take steps to obtain from the peers a declaration that they would absent themselves from the House of Lords and allow the Bill to pass.

On the afternoon of the same day, May 17, the King saw the Duke of Wellington, and in the evening received from him the following assurance:

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON TO SIR H. TAYLOR.

"LONDON,
"*May* 17, 1832.

"MY DEAR GENERAL,

"I have received your letter of this day's date. I told the King that, as an individual peer,

I would not attend the further discussion of the Reform Bill. Lord Lyndhurst did the same. We both propose to act accordingly.

"But I confess that I don't think that I can declare in the House of Lords what my course will be, as a condition that the Minister should refrain from his recommendation that peers should be created to carry the Bill, without making myself a party to his proceeding.

"Ever, &c.,
"WELLINGTON."

From that moment the crisis was ended.

It is true that during the evening, after writing to the King, the Duke made a violent speech in the House of Lords, and was followed in a similar strain by other Lords, who had given their adhesion to the policy of surrender.

It was the usual Parliamentary method of covering a retreat. But it was not so understood by Lord Grey, who pressed the King on the following day for "guarantees" in the shape of a promise to create peers.

The King, however, was satisfied. He had the Duke of Wellington's letter in his pocket, and he knew the Duke well enough to feel assured of his word. On receiving a fresh Cabinet minute, requesting an assurance that peers would be created, the King immediately replied that "he was prepared to afford them the security they required"; and with this view authorizes Lord Grey, "if any obstacle should arise during the further progress of the Bill," to submit to him a creation of peers sufficient to pass the measure.

But the King was well aware, when he gave this conditional promise, that no further obstacle would arise, and that the Tory leader had decided to allow the Bill to pass.

In point of fact, the decision had been taken so long before as May 14, the day upon which Mr. Baring delivered his speech in the House of Commons.

That night (May 14) the House rose at 11.30, and at midnight the Speaker took Sir R. Peel in his coach to a meeting at Apsley House. The Duke had heard from Baring what had taken place during the debate, and after much discussion the following resolution was moved by Sir R. Peel and carried:

That the Duke should tell the King it was impossible to hope to form a Tory Administration on the basis of passing the Reform Bill, and that, therefore, His Majesty must take his own course. The Duke was to add that in order to save His Majesty's personal honour as to the creation of peers, he himself would, so far as depended upon him, remove all pretence for such a creation by withdrawing his opposition.

After examining the proceedings of the Ministers and the Opposition in 1832, it is not difficult to understand the scepticism of Lord Brougham, who in his "Political Philosophy" asks the question whether or not, if no secession had taken place, and the peers had persisted in really opposing the most important provision of the Bill, recourse would have been had to the perilous creation.

In his reply he says:

"I cannot with any confidence answer it in the affirmative. I had a strong feeling of the necessity of the case in the very peculiar circumstances we were placed in. But such was my deep sense of the dreadful consequences of the act, that I much question whether I should not have preferred running the risk of confusion that attended the loss of the Bill as it then stood; and I have a strong impression on my mind that my illustrious friend (Lord Grey) would have more than met me half-way in the determination to face that risk (and of course to face the clamours of the people, which would have cost us little), rather than expose the Constitution to so imminent a hazard of subversion."

Whatever may be thought of Lord Brougham, it must not be forgotten that he was the Lord Chancellor, and present at the Cabinet of May 16, when the minute was drawn up, which was subsequently submitted by Lord Grey to the King.

Lord Campbell did not believe Lord Brougham's statement. He did not doubt that if Lord Lyndhurst had not quailed fifty peers would have been created. But he rejoices that what he called a serious blow to the Constitution had been warded off, and of the King's refusal which led to the resignation of Lord Grey, he writes:

"The King cannot be blamed for refusing, as such a step could be considered only a *coup-d'État*, and he had been told by persons about him that there was no necessity for it, as the peers were now ready to yield a large measure of reform, although they would not agree to the ruin of their order."

The conclusion seems obvious enough.

The "catastrophic creation of peers" was approached, but there is insufficient evidence to assert with certainty that it would have been consummated.

Therefore Queen Anne's creation in 1711, stands alone as the solitary precedent for what apparently both statesmen and historians have considered to be an unconstitutional use of the Royal prerogative.

IV.

An unwritten Constitution rests upon precedent and reasonableness. I did not set out to enquire where unreasonableness lies, or which of the great parties in the State has departed from precedent. It is sufficient to note that our unwritten Constitution, which has served us well, is apparently out of date. For its smooth working in the past trained statesmen and hereditary politicians were largely responsible.

Since the revolution of 1688 the equipoise of the three estates of the realm has only once been disturbed by an act of violence—when Queen Anne, in 1711, at the instance of Oxford, swamped the House of Lords. Those were early days of Cabinet government, and, in spite of considerable strain and much provocation, good sense and a reasonable spirit of compromise have maintained hitherto the balance of the Constitution. This was eminently the case in 1832, when the Reform Bill, which is now generally admitted to have been a measure

both moderate and necessary, was passed into law with the tacit consent of its opponents after the will of the country had been expressed in the clearest manner.

It is incredible that anyone who cares for the historical traditions of our country, who takes a pride in the achievements of a long line of British statesmen, and who was brought up to admire institutions, "broadening down from precedent to precedent," should not feel regret at the first serious attempt to define by statute the relations between the three estates of the realm.

I am, of course, aware that, just as Bills of Rights in their origin have proved to be bonds between Sovereigns and their people, defining prerogative and confirming privilege, so a new Bill of Rights might advantageously define the relations which should exist in future between the two Houses of Parliament. If a measure, presently to be introduced, assumed this form, it would possess fewer objectionable features in the eyes of the "historical" politician.

It appears to be generally conceded that, whether the country returns a Liberal or a Unionist majority to the House of Commons, some attempt to substitute a statutory for our unwritten Constitution is likely to be made. Extremists say that, if the new House of Commons is Conservative, the centre of political gravity will be transferred to a reconstituted House of Lords, containing novel elements, but mainly hereditary and Conservative. On the

other hand, if a Liberal majority is returned to the House of Commons, the Second Chamber will be first swamped and then abolished.

Where does the truth lie? Either project would be a revolution, since the Constitution as we have known it, and as our fathers knew it, will have passed away.

I am not, however, so much concerned with results as with methods and procedure. Our history shows that, when Ministers speak of "guarantees" and "assurances" which are to enable them to overcome the possible resistance of one of the Houses of Parliament averse from a great constitutional change, there are no "guarantees" or "assurances" they can ask for which could be interpreted otherwise than as an unconstitutional use of brute force.

It is true that Lord Grey, in a famous passage, speaking of the prerogative of the Crown to create peers, said:

"I ask what would be the consequences if we were to suppose that such a prerogative did not exist, or could not be constitutionally exercised. The Commons have a control over the power of the Crown by the privilege in extreme cases of refusing supplies; and the Crown has, by means of its power to dissolve the House of Commons, a control upon any violent and rash proceedings on the part of the Commons; but if a majority of this House (the Lords) is to have the power whenever they please of opposing the declared and decided wishes both of the Crown and the people, without any means of modifying that power, then this

country is placed entirely under the influence of an uncontrollable oligarchy."

The superficial view could not be more neatly put. But Lord Grey overlooked the real facts, which were obvious to Mr. Burke forty years before, when in his letter to the Duke of Portland, speaking of the House of Lords as in itself the feeblest part of the Constitution, supported only by its connection with the Crown and the House of Commons, he said that without these connections it could not exist a single year, and added: "All these parts of our Constitution, whilst they are balanced as opposing interests, are also connected as friends; otherwise nothing but confusion could be the result." Lord Grey, enveloped in the dust of battle, could see no issue from the political conflict except by bringing up the "reserve forces" of the Constitution. For him there was no clearness of vision. The truth was, and is, that without compromise, without a display of reasonableness, there could and can not be victory within the limits of constitutional action.

There was no essential difference and no moral distinction between swamping the majority of one of the Houses of Parliament by men in black coats or by men in red. Force was the essence of both.

Ask any dispassionate student of history, a Frenchman or a Japanese, how it came about that the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed into law, and why the House of Lords yielded. His answer would not

be that it was because of a threat to create peers. He would say: "On October 3, 1831, there was a meeting of 150,000 men at Birmingham who declared by acclamation that if the Reform Bill did not pass they would refuse the payment of taxes, as John Hampden had refused to pay ship money, except by a levy on their goods."

And "On May 14, 1832, a petition was presented to the House of Commons from the City of London, praying the House to withhold supplies till the Reform Bill should have passed." It was not indolence or timidity or "flaccid latitudinarianism," as Lord Morley used to say, which induced the House of Lords to give way, but robust political sense, which told them that their good fight was fought out, and that not a political or factious majority, but the great mass of their fellow-countrymen of all classes, whether in the Midlands or the City of London, desired the Reform Bill to become law.

If to-day, the growth of our political organism requires a change in the relations between the two Houses of Parliament, certain conditions must be fulfilled before any Bill fundamentally altering the Constitution should be passed.

First, the issue must be made perfectly clear, and be understood of the people.

Secondly, the change should receive the emphatic or tacit consent of all reasonable men.

If ever there was a case for compromise, it is to be found to-day. In this country political habits

of thought and of government are too far advanced to make it expedient that one half *plus* a small fraction of the community should impose its will upon what practically amounts to the other half. For any Minister by an act of high prerogative to attempt such a course of action would be altogether to misinterpret the meaning of government by majorities. It would be the action of an arbitrary and unreflecting political temper; and, unless the whole character of Englishmen has changed, would be met by very stern reprisals. On the other hand, resistance to the popular will, when it has been clearly expressed and maintained beyond the limits of momentary effervescence, leads surely to what has been finely called "sinister government"; and any honest Minister, taking stock of modern powers of combination and uprising, should be loth to put them to the test.

To assume, as is sometimes done, that revolutions spring from social causes is to misread history. Mankind revolts against curable, not incurable evils. Since the advent of parliamentary government we, in England, have been immune from revolution. This is due, mainly, to the political flexibility of the English temperament, to the abhorrence of our people for obstinate fanaticism in their public men, and to their passion for moderation and common sense.

Bluster is natural enough before and during a general election. But when an election is over, that weapon must be laid in its scabbard, and woe

betide the political leader or leaders of either party, if in the long-run they fail to respond to the desire of the nation that this constitutional strife shall cease, and that by a reasonable compromise the relations between the two Houses shall be put upon such a footing that the business of the country, whether it be social reform, or adequate measures for national defence, shall proceed unhindered.

V.

In the discussions concerning the composition of the House of Lords the most pregnant remark was made by Lord Morley when he suggested that reformers must make up their minds whether they want the Upper House made stronger or weaker.

Twenty years ago the teacher to whom many looked for guidance upon ethical and political questions was the late Mr. Henry Sidgwick. He was justly revered as an ardent lover of truth and as a man of singularly sane and unbiassed judgment. Everyone was aware that he had devoted much time and thought to problems of government; and he has mentioned that his conclusions were fortified by discussion with Mr. F. W. Maitland and Mr. A. V. Dicey, Mr. James Bryce and Mr. Arthur Balfour.

It would be impossible within the limits of this letter to give an adequate idea of his careful analysis of the functions of two Houses of Parliament. His book should be read; but the chapter on "Elements

of Politics," in which he deals with the question, has been summarized by him as follows:

"1. A Second Chamber, though not necessary, is useful in checking hasty legislation, impeding combinations of sinister interests, and supplementing the deficiencies of the primary representative Assembly.

"2. To give the two Chambers co-ordinate powers is the simplest plan; but it creates a difficulty as regards financial control, and is generally unsuited to Parliamentary government; it is more suitable where the Supreme Executive holds office for life or for a fixed period.

"3. A Senate designed to be co-ordinate in power with the House of Representatives should be elected, directly or indirectly, by the citizens at large; if its power is more limited, other modes of appointment are suitable."

The question which at this moment is agitating Parliament could not be more neatly posed.

When Lord Morley asks whether the House of Lords in future is to be co-ordinate with the House of Commons, or whether its powers are to be more limited, and points out that upon the answer to this question the composition of the House of Lords should depend, the conclusions of Mr. Henry Sidgwick cannot fail to assist greatly those who are anxious to find a rational and practical solution of the problem.

If his view is accepted, then the plan attributed, perhaps erroneously, to Sir Edward Grey, of a House of Lords on an elective basis, but subordinate to the House of Commons, would prove to be un-

workable; while the plan attributed to Lord Rosebery, of a House of Lords with co-ordinate powers, but containing a strong elective element, would be unsuited to parliamentary government.

If what is required is a parliamentary machine which will work easily and without friction, and not a political assertion of the superiority of the elective principle under all circumstances and conditions, then the House of Lords should not be based, like the House of Commons, upon popular election.

Putting aside violent counsels, what is the relation between the two Houses which reasonable people wished to see established?

1. They want the will of the people as represented by the House of Commons ultimately to prevail.

2. They wish for a House of Lords composed of men efficient, by reason of their public experience, to act as critics and revisers of measures passed by the House of Commons.

3. They desire to see a House of Lords strong enough to refer to the decision of the electorate measures of far-reaching import which have not received the approval of the nation; but not strong enough to destroy such measures when the will of the country has been declared.

4. They are anxious, while endeavouring to meet the progressive requirements of a modern State, to maintain the ancient customs of Parliament, and to leave unbroken the historic traditions which bind the monarchy of to-day to the monarchy of Elizabeth.

Problems far more intricate confronted the statesmen of 1688 and 1832, and they did not prove to be insoluble.

A slight readjustment of relations between the two Houses of Parliament, and a moderate change in the composition of the House of Lords, would not have appeared very formidable tasks to the men who altered the succession to the Throne, and finally established the Protestant religion, or an insuperable difficulty to those who reformed the old House of Commons.

In both cases, however, the assent of the nation, as a whole, had to be obtained; and the Constitution of Great Britain never has been, and never can be, drastically modified by a bare majority of votes.

Behind Lord Rosebery's scheme of reform lurks a social danger upon which some consideration should be bestowed.

Freeman, in his book on "Comparative Politics," which deserves attention at this juncture, observes that the peerage of England is not a nobility in the sense in which nobility is understood in foreign lands, and he gives an explanation, worthy of some attention, why we have been saved from a *noblesse* in the foreign sense:

"Why did not a nobility of the foreign type grow up among the Norman conquerors themselves? That great law of William which made every man in the land the man of the King, had much to do with it, but paradoxical as it may sound, I conceive that the very power and dignity of the peerage has had a good deal to do with it also. Elsewhere nobility

was primarily a matter of rank and privilege, with which political power might or might not be connected.

"But in an English peerage the primary idea is political power; rank and privilege are a mere adjunct.

"The peer does not hold a mere rank which he can share with his descendants; he holds an office, which passes to his next heir when he dies, but which he cannot share with any man while he lives.

"The peer then, not a mere noble, but a legislator, a counsellor, and a judge holds a distinct place in the State which his children can no more share with him than anyone else. Hence in England we have but two classes, peers and commoners, those who hold office and those who do not.

"The children of a peer come under this last head as much as other men; they are therefore commoners. The very existence of the peerage itself hinders the existence of a nobility in the true sense of the word."

Those, therefore, who favour the extinction of a peer's office as such should pause for a moment on the threshold of action to enquire whether it would be prudent to retain the prerogative of the Crown that enables any hereditary title to be conferred, or, if retained, it should not be subject to severe limitations in favour of those who have rendered conspicuous and rare service to the State. There is undoubtedly a social danger in adding to great wealth or great landed possessions the prestige of social rank unchecked by the responsibility which parliamentary office imposes upon every member of the peerage.

Life peerages would not be open to this objection. Although Lord Hugh Cecil's accuracy in historical detail has been questioned, his inherited historical instinct served him well when he was led to suggest that not by election or by selection, but by withholding or issuing a writ of summons by the Crown, in short, by a carefully guarded system of life peerages, a House of Lords might be obtained without any undue strain of the constitutional practice under which for centuries the Lords of Parliament have been summoned to assist in the work of government.

In that direction lies, very possibly, a solution of at least one-half of the difficulties which face statesmen of both parties.

VI.

I said four months ago that it did not seem possible to escape from the political deadlock without a political revolution. The Government appear to have come to a similar conclusion, for their policy is not to-day one of reform, but of revolution. They speak of using a reserve power in the Constitution, but what they mean is the use of exceptional force, without precedent, to override one of the Estates of the Realm. To swamp one House of Parliament by the incursion of 500 newly created peers is a proceeding which does not differ much, in spirit and method, from that of a certain Colonel Thomas Pride when he seized 47 and excluded from Westminster 96 members of

the other House. If there is a doubtful precedent for the creation of peers to coerce the House of Lords, there is an undoubted precedent for the employment of force to coerce the House of Commons.

I am not arguing that this so-called dormant prerogative should not be exercised. I am stating facts, and endeavouring to show that to use such a power is an act of revolution. There is, however, another aspect in which the Government policy is the policy of revolution. It appears to have been grasped by Sir H. Dalziel and a few members of the House of Commons. The Veto Bill apparently is not intended to be a permanent amendment of the law. It is a transitory or temporary expedient, designed to bring about some undisclosed, or only partially disclosed, constitutional change at a later stage. The preamble of the Bill, we are told, explains this novel act of statecraft. The Veto Bill is wanted, not to define permanently a statutory relation between two Houses of Parliament, but to enable a new law to be passed radically altering the basis and composition of one of them, upon a vague plan of which the nation is not to be seized until a later stage. Parenthetically, there is apparently nothing to prevent the use of this exceptional power for changing the Constitution in other ways, for altering the Acts of Union, for abolishing the Established Churches of Great Britain, or possibly for modifying the Act of Settlement, the 12th and 13th of William III.

The desire to vest such exceptional powers in a Single Chamber by the use of a prerogative, which, as I have endeavoured to show in these letters, was never intended to be used for any purpose of the kind, can only be designated as a policy of revolution. I am not setting up a bogey. Revolution has been found to be necessary before now, and may be necessary again; but politicians who embark on revolutionary courses must always remember that behind revolution lurk insurrection and civil war. The function of statesmanship is to harness political passion to the fixed star of political common sense, to check precipitate resolves, and to make all violent change a matter of compromise.

No unprejudiced mind can deny that the difficulties of government have been increased by the action of the House of Lords in throwing out the Budget of 1909. But it does not follow from this that the obvious remedy is to subvert the Constitution under which we have lived and under which great reforms, from the emancipation of the Catholics down to the practical passing of Mr. Lloyd George's Budget, have been carried into law. Is no weight to attach to the views of the most eminent statesmen and of the greatest lawyers and publicists of bygone days, to whichever party they belonged? Whether it is Sir Henry Maine or Mr. Sidgwick, whether it is Lord Brougham or Edmund Burke, whether it is Mr. Pitt or Mr. Gladstone, you can find in their utterances no reasoned judgment on the checks and balances of our Constitu-

tion which justifies the action contemplated by the Government. A House of Lords acting merely as "another stage through which Bills must pass in the Commons as now constituted, would be but little security for revision and reflection," said Lord Brougham when he was discussing, not a House of Lords deprived of its power to reject a Bill, but a House of Lords based upon a purely elective principle. "The great security would have been wholly wanting," he continues, "which results and can only result from the nature, structure, origin, and interests of two bodies being entirely different, and which depends on the full discussion only to be obtained from such really conflicting bodies." There has never been so far a Liberal of eminence who has maintained the contrary. Are opinions so weighty from statesmen so experienced to be thrust aside because of a party quarrel which far-seeing and temperate statesmanship should be able to compose?

Burke—a noble mixture of Liberal ideas and Conservative leanings—never disputed, as no one disputes to-day, the abstract competence of the "people" to subject permanent reason to occasional will, but he questioned the moral right of any of those who exercise authority in the State to do so. He questioned the moral competence of the House of Lords to dissolve itself, or to abdicate, if it would, its position in the Legislature of the kingdom.

"Though a King may abdicate for his own person, he cannot abdicate for the Monarchy."

He realized, as apparently few do now, that the engagement or pact which generally goes by the name of the Constitution forbids both invasion and surrender. "The constituent parts of a State," he says, "are obliged to hold their public faith with each other, and with all those who derive any serious interest under their engagements, as much as the whole State is bound to keep its faith with separate communities. Otherwise, competence and power would soon be confounded, and no law left but the will of a prevailing force." For wisdom of this kind we are now asked to substitute declamatory phrases about the will of the people. It recalls the bitterness of the Book of Job, "No doubt they are the people, and wisdom shall die with them." Neither this country, however, nor any country that I ever heard of, has allowed its Constitution to be fundamentally altered by a bare majority of votes.

The recent action of the House of Lords upon Lord Rosebery's resolutions is a proof that a general feeling prevails throughout the nation that the Liberal party has a sound grievance, and that some reform is wanted. The House of Lords reflects this general feeling. But this does not justify the proposed remedy. If by the policy of the Government a crises arises shortly, what, as at present determined, would be the issue submitted to the country at a general election? What would each party lose if the issue is decided against it? A Government majority means to the Unionist party a Single Chamber absolutely uncontrolled. Is not

this, from a Conservative point of view, too vast a risk? A Unionist majority means to the Liberal party the transfer of political power from the House of Commons to the House of Lords. Is not this, for a Liberal, a gambler's throw? In either case the balance of the Constitution, as we know it to-day, will have been destroyed. Why should peaceful people who are not partisans submit to so violent a transformation, to so complete a leap into the dark?

When politicians speak of a "reserve force" in the Constitution they appear to mean the use of the Royal prerogative, or some method more suitable to the Stuart Kings than to a "Democratic" Ministry in the twentieth century. The only rational reserve force in the Constitution is the common sense of the nation, which, at certain moments, insists upon accommodation and compromise between party leaders. We have had many proofs of it, from the religious compromises of the seventeenth down to the political compromises of the nineteenth century. If the story of what happened in 1884 is examined, it will be found that the Tory party claimed to accompany a great reform of political machinery with certain definite safeguards. They carried their point because the English and Scots people, however much they may declaim, are Whigs at heart and ultimately choose the middle way. Mr. Gladstone did not object to the word "accommodation" and disliked the word "compromise." So be it.

REFLECTIONS SUGGESTED BY LORD MORLEY'S POLITICAL NOTES.*

I.

If it be true that democracy, in the discussions of the day, means government working directly through public opinion, does it necessarily follow that democratic government need work through a parliament, or, indeed, through any representative body at all?

This question is of some interest at the present juncture of political affairs, when obvious as well as unexplored changes are taking place in the Constitution of our country. Scattered through the history of the English people there are dazzling moments of spasmodic change when political progress seems to give a sudden leap forward. Such a moment was the passage of the Reform Bill in 1832. Another was the culminating Education policy of the Liberal party in 1870. Sometimes the path of a political measure to its goal is obscure and devious, as when Free Trade was said to have travelled across an Ireland devastated by potato famine before finding final expression in Sir

* Published in the *New Statesman*, in January and February, 1914.

Robert Peel's famous Act. No need to labour the point. Supremely interesting to us is the speculative meaning of the ferment going on in Ulster to-day, among the Trade Unions in England and Scotland, and especially in the political party calling itself Unionist and Conservative. Is it democracy seeking new means of expression? Is it popular desire for some form of government working more directly through public opinion than is compatible with a representative assembly? Does it foreshadow the fall of our ancient parliamentary system? Is England, the Mother of Parliaments, about to give birth to some new method of expressing the popular will in matters of government? Such a problem, suggested by Lord Morley's recent book, seems worthy of meditation and discussion.

Parliament and the House of Commons are terms meaning very different things at different periods of our national story. When Mr. Balfour speaks of himself, as he loves to do, as a "House of Commons man," what precisely is in his mind? Is he thinking of the House of Commons in which sat Pym and Hampden; or Walpole's house of placemen; or the House led by the elder Pitt and by his son, or by Peel, or Disraeli, or by Gladstone and himself? In point of fact, Peel's House of Commons in 1845 was as different from Pitt's as is Mr. Asquith's from Disraeli's. It is true that Mr. Balfour, remembering the Fourth party in 1880, may see resemblances to the Cobham

Cubs of a hundred and fifty years before; but these sporadic manifestations of youthful spirit and talent are common to all assemblies of men.

Look, however, down the Ministerial Front Bench to-day, and what could be less like a row of Palmerston's colleagues or the Gladstonian Ministers of 1880? Instead of a row of hereditary politicians picked from "governing families" in huge preponderance, with here and there a shame-faced and uneasy plebeian, we have the Colonial Secretary sitting alone for the old tradition. Instead of a Lower House nominally inferior, but proudly cognizant of its real power, we have the vulgar predominance of a boastful House of Commons, based not upon sure recognition of its representative character and of the people's will, but upon an ill-drawn, half-hearted statute. The Parliament of Pitt and Canning has gone into the limbo of Old Sarum and the rest. The Parliament of Disraeli and Gladstone has followed after. If, then, democracy to-day means government working directly through public opinion, what will presently happen to the Parliament of Mr. Asquith?

It is clear to every watcher that the executive and legislative machinery is undergoing profound alteration, but what is not so clear is the change in political ideas and political aspirations. "C'est toujours le beau monde qui Gouverne le monde" can no longer be well and truly said. Certainly it has ceased to be true of this country. No great matter perhaps, for the real question seems to be

not so much who governs as to whether the word "Government" still possesses its old and well-worn meaning. Observe the strange tendencies in every area of executive authority and in every field of legislative enterprise. The old shibboleths of our ancestors are forgotten and their political methods transformed. "I will maintain the Liberties of England and the Protestant Religion" was the motto of the House of Orange, a colour only suggesting to-day to the heirs of the "Revolution families" an infuriated and implacable Ulster. "No taxation without representation" has become a meaningless phrase to politicians begging with veiled threats naval contributions, in money or kind, from the great Dominions and Crown Colonies. "Civis Romanus" must ring tunelessly enough in the ears of a dark-skinned subject, honourably loyal to King George, who finds himself an alien from the Commonwealth and a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope; while "peace, retrenchment and reform" is a phrase that not even the biographer of Cobden can venture to whisper at Cabinets engaged in approving the highest naval and military and civil estimates ever presented to any Parliament in any land.

Although they are still half-hidden, the changes in our political institutions brought about by the rejection of the Budget in 1909 and by the passage into law of the Parliament Bill of 1911 are deep-seated and transforming. Nothing so drastic has been done since 1832. Nomination boroughs,

limited rights of representation, the sale of seats, and the preposterous cost of elections, were swept away by the Reform Bill of Lord Grey. Thirty-six years, from 1832 to 1868, passed before the full effect of Lord Grey's measure was realized. Mr. Asquith's Parliament Act has had results more drastic, for it has threatened the existence of Parliament itself, and has rendered possible the effective revolt of the people against Representative Government. Monarchical attempts in former times to destroy the balance of the Constitution led to the rebellion of Parliament and to a limited Monarchy. The House of Commons, destroying in 1911 the balance of our parliamentary system, has, in so doing, precipitated the revolt of the nation, and rendered inevitable a limited Parliament. A limited monarchy, said Sir George Cornewall Lewis, is a hereditary king associated with a parliamentary body. His successor at the Exchequer may shortly be defining a limited Parliament as a House of Commons associated with a poll of the people.

Who was it who said in reference to constitutional changes that an ignorant man, who is not fool enough to meddle with his clock, is, however, sufficiently confident to think that he can safely take to pieces and put together a moral machine of quite another guise? Well, we have eminent politicians engaged just now in trying to screw together the pieces of a Constitution, admired and widely copied, which was not the work of a Sieyès,

or even of an Alexander Hamilton, but "came to fruition as the result of many minds, in many ages."

"We want no foreign examples to rekindle in us the flame of liberty," Burke once wrote. So let the framers of Senates and Second Chambers, in spite of or in accordance with preambles and pledges, beware of rousing the insular spirit and just vanity of our people. England has never failed to strike out new lines of her own. To the intricacies of feudalism, of Tudor monarchism, of Whig oligarchy, our institutions adapted themselves, borrowing nothing from other nations, but responsive to the needs of the hour. Modern democracy, or "Government working directly through public opinion," is seeking free methods of expression. Very new is the wine now in the making, and the old double-necked parliamentary bottle is perilously out of date, and dangerously unsuitable.

"Public opinion," easily aroused in a people intelligent, literate, and conscious of power, desires more "direct" means of expression than *representative* government affords. The rumblings of popular resentment against "delegation" are ominously loud, whether among trade unionists who defy their "leaders" or the great Conservative party in politics that clamours for recurrent appeals to the constituencies. The life of Parliament has been shortened by law from seven years to five. Popular opinion, judging from its expression in the Press and on the platform, desires still further to shorten the term in practice. The House of

Commons is no longer composed of free and independent representatives, elected to "redress grievances" and to legislate for the people, but of paid delegates. We may still claim for the House of Commons that it virtually selects the Prime Minister of the day and registers his executive decrees. For short and ever-shortening periods this plan still works. Executive authority is delegated to a chosen statesman not unwillingly for five years. Then, at latest, the people desire a fresh voice in the matter. Presently the term will be still further shortened to four years or three. The rapidly recurring general elections indicate it, and "democracy" notoriously tires easily of its leaders —even of Aristides.

Popular representation—the delegation of legislative power—had for its basis the illiteracy of a people. Newspapers and the capacity of the constituent masses to read them have sapped the foundations of representative government, as it has been understood in England, and "public opinion" seems about to require more "direct working" than the parliamentary system has hitherto afforded, or is likely to afford.

II.

If the most marked of all the agitations of the nineteenth century was the political movement for national autonomy, how fares the sentiment of nationality to-day? Is it still transformed into a vivid political idea, and is it still a dominating

force? Does the modern English demos—the mass of the English people—does democratic government, "working directly through public opinion," attach more or less value to the idea of nationality?

This sentiment, which inflamed visionaries, then grew potent with multitudes, says Lord Morley, "and from instinct became idea; from idea abstract principle; then fervid prepossession; ending where it is to-day, in dogma, whether accepted or evaded," is it to-day repudiated? Here, it may well be, is a new factor, the breeze of indifference or the blast of negative, the chill breath of a new estranging era!

If nationality became the deepest and most powerful of revolutionary secrets during the progress of the nineteenth century, it may happen that its negative may prove to be the revolutionary password of the age in which we live.

Our language, and the mental habits of the English people, do not lend themselves to the definition of terms in common use. Where a Frenchman finds a word exactly qualified to express his meaning, we take the first that comes to hand. Nationality, State or nation, conveys sufficiently the idea of a common bond, originating in race, dominion, or the land of our birth. If there is no decisive test, we all know what is meant by such terms as the English nation or the British Empire.

Lord Morley contends that nationality has been

a commanding impulse for the century that is just over, but he whispers a warning that science, working against the spirit of nationality, and making for cosmopolitanism, may in the coming years act as a powerful disintegrating force. He suggests that in congresses in every capital of the world nationality is effaced. But is this effacement of nationality in congresses, whether summoned in the name of Peace at The Hague, or of Therapeutics in London, so noticeable a phenomenon? Ehrlich appeared as distinctly German as was Huxley a truly aggressive Briton, and Metchnikoff could never disperse that characteristic atmosphere of the Slav that clings about his person and his speech any more than Pasteur could in a laboratory in Pekin have passed for anything but a Frenchman.

Extended knowledge, too, so frequently miscalled education, permeating the masses of the people, may well produce towards the sentiment of nationality the sort of reaction that I have suggested is at work against the conventional idea of "representative government."

A few weeks ago in the United Service Institution, before a number of distinguished soldiers, a working man was bold enough to say that it mattered little to him and his fellows if the country were governed by the Emperor William or by King George. What lies at the root of such a confession except the awakening of the people to a sense of their physical misery? This man's words

are not new to those who have moved among the workers in the Midlands or in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Patriotism in the eyes of these people is a luxurious habit of mind of the well-to-do. Their absorption is "Round about a Pound a Week." It may well happen, unless this symptom is carefully watched and treated, that the twentieth century may produce a rude revulsion against the dominating sentiment, as Lord Morley describes it, of the nineteenth.

It is fascinating to generalize as Lord Morley does about the colour of the centuries and the texture of national impulse. Great is the temptation to follow such a lead; but as we reflect upon the growth of nations and empires, in Italy, for example, and North Germany, we cannot overlook the wholesale destruction by Englishmen of nations and States in other latitudes, and the forceful upbuilding of the British Empire, in Victorian times, upon a foundation of crushed nationalities.

If Tyrol, Moscow, Leipzig are names for immortal chapters in the story of national uprisings—Sobraon, Delhi, and Tel-el-Kebir, if not the surrender at Appomattox, are fatal inscriptions upon the tablets of people "rightly struggling to be free." Lord Morley would note the phrase, and perhaps find some difficulty in reconciling its soaring aim with the tradition of the great office in Whitehall over which he so brilliantly presided, or the policy of the nation he has for so long helped to direct. That is the worst of history. You never can be secure in a generalization, or

a deduction, whether you take "your meals in the kitchen," as Lord Acton said, or in the best parlour. Yet how satisfying is the outlook over the broad landscape of the past, and how tempting to note the mountain ranges and forget the valleys beyond; to follow the course of rolling rivers, and ignore the tiny burns that swell their tide! Equally, perhaps more alluring, is the *Weltanschauung* to-day, the attempt to summarize the spiritual and material tendencies of the age in which we live. The soul of Mazzini, the splendid tenacity of Cavour, the iron will of Bismarck, and the pungent virility of Lincoln, may have spent their force before the present century closes; who can be sure? The "two nations," according to Disraeli—and this was years ago—were the rich and the poor. There is a curious phrase which has slowly gripped the minds of younger men in quite recent days: "The Empire is my country, England is my home." These words are conspicuously inscribed in arresting letters before the eyes of thousands of children in day-schools, and they are to be seen upon the walls of institutes and every manner of building dedicated to the amusement or enlightenment of the young. If they imply merely some form of megalomania, called Imperialism, some vulgar aspiration to be members of an Imperial State of larger extent and greater wealth than Germany or the United States, they bode ill for the future; for, as the greatest of our philosoper-statesmen said long ago, there is so essential a difference between the scale of miles

and the scale of forces. But if they imply a wider outlook, a nobler sense of nationality, a broader humanitarian sympathy, an aspiration towards the brotherhood of the workers, a step towards the collective effort of men of the same race and language all over the world, they are full of hope. Just as it is possible to combine civic and national emotion, so the words I have quoted suggest the interlacing of a national and imperial sentiment. If men begin to realize, and women too, the manifold and intertwining bonds that link nations together—faith, literature, art, wealth, commerce, and, above all, as Lord Morley suggests, the enmeshing strands of science, this new century may come to understand such a phrase as "Europe our country, and Great Britain our home." Why analyze or disperse the vision? It is only fools who see no visions, and men born old who dream no dreams.

Nelson, when captain of the *Agamemnon*, used to race to the mizzentop with his midshipmen, and then tell them "to hate a Frenchman as they would the devil." It was a useful working maxim in those days of stress. But if such a sentiment could be transformed into the nationality of a Mazzini or a Cavour, so it may well happen that the spirit of racial and historic pride which was theirs may merge not dishonourably in triple alliances and triple ententes, and, broadening down into further combinations, may in the course of this century—already in labour with effulgent

moral and physical change—give to the words of nationality and patriotism, if not a very different meaning, a very different quality.

III.

"Is the track all upward?" Lord Morley asks, and then goes on to warn that a universal law, for all times, all States, all societies, Progress is not. He is careful, however, to note that the word Progress may be variously defined, and he would perhaps repudiate the increasing happiness of the greatest number as its potential meaning. If, however, that definition is accepted, and a sufficiently long view be taken, is the track not all upward?

It may require a mind young and sanguine to answer the question cordially in the affirmative. "The new world of machines and mobs and vulgarity," a brilliant writer, fortunate in the possession of hereditary gifts, reminds us, seemed to Carlyle and Tennyson "just a bad mistake and nothing more, a driving of the car of humanity into the ditch." These accessories of our modern life may be unpicturesque, but they cannot be described seriously as signs of national decay. It is not to mobs and machines that a nation growing old renounces its will, its faith, and the whole essence of its being, but rather, as the preachers have often warned us, in favour of the giver of pleasure. I would prefer to believe that machines and mobs and vulgarity—in the sense of that word as Carlyle used it—are the counterpoise to the

more insidious allurements noted by Gibbon in the lauded age of Domitian, when, according to his judgment, the human race was at the zenith of happiness and prosperity.

But then "slavery was the horrid base," says Lord Morley, appreciating the progress of mankind in, at any rate, one sphere of ethical habit. If the blackness has since been lightened, we cannot afford to ignore those grey vistas of poverty—slavery too, though of another fashion—especially in the great cities of the world, which are the "horrid base" of our civilization now. Mill doubted whether all mechanical inventions have lightened human toil, or freed from drudgery and imprisonment the marginal worker—that basic factor of modern society. Lord Morley rightly holds that the "drudgery and imprisonment" is not what it was; that child labour has been abolished, that the labour of women is guarded, and the hours of men are reduced. Within circumscribed areas this is doubtless true, and the reflection brings with it a glimmer of hope for the future.

Still, when we look over the earth's surface, and count our own unhappy millions, and set them against the lesser thousands of the Roman world, Mommsen's balance of total happiness struck in favour of the age of the Antonines does not appear so fantastic. But it is not to the generalizations and inferences of historians, however profound; or to the cynicism of Voltaire, who said that we shall leave the world just as stupid and bad as we

found it; or to the gloom of Schopenhauer's conclusion that wise men of all times have always said the same, and fools—that is, the universal majority—have always done the same; or to Treitschke, "the German Machiavel of the nineteenth century," that we must look for the answer to Lord Morley's question: "Is the track all upward?"

For ages men have vainly sought for Progress in the human heart and understanding; for Progress is not to be found in the storm of conflicting passions or in the lightning flash of intellect. The still small voice of scientific research, the unrolling of the scroll of experience, and the magic augmentation of our everyday knowledge of material truth are the accompaniment of advance. The secret of Progress has always been and still lies there. Minds "innocent and quiet" have been uncaged and find freedom everywhere; and I am not here concerned with these deeper things. Progress, the gradual increasing happiness of the masses, the upward track, is marked by finger-posts emblazoned with such names as Jenner, Pasteur, Lister, Kelvin, Curie, Ehrlich, names standing for that patient search into the recesses of Nature inseparably connected with the story of the nineteenth century and the days in which we are living. The alleviation of pain, the succour of men and women wounded in the struggle for life, the smoothing of the way down into the valley of death, are achievements which Leonardo or Bacon or Goethe would have acclaimed to be sure signs of an upward track.

We may all agree that progress is no "auto-

maton spontaneous and self-propelling," and that it depends upon the play of forces within our community and external to it. It depends, says Lord Morley, in a characteristic passage, "on the room left by the State for the enterprise, energy and initiative of the individual." Here, with a flash of the gladiatorial blade, Lord Morley recalls to memory that long roll of fighters immortalized by Comte, and appeals to the individualism that in wilder days, and under simpler conditions, has played its part well. Meanwhile the net of the *retiarius*—the web of collective energy and of combined enterprise—is swinging about his feet.

Is it not an error to assume that the world is not wide enough for "individualism" and for "socialism, syndicalism, anarchism," or whatever barbarous name you please to affix to the revolt of man, freed by the spread of knowledge and by the wand of Science, from old limitations, not of thought but of action? To insist upon the necessary and inevitable conflict between individual and collective "initiative and enterprise" is a confusion of which Lord Morley's spirit, "free from mists and sane and clear," is not likely to be guilty. In the quiet sphere of reflection, in the cloistered domain of research, in the unexplored lands of imagination, there is room, and plenty, for the "enterprise, energy and initiative of the individual." Never can man be deprived of or asked to share his own soul. But in spheres of action the case is wholly different. Herein it may well happen that

the new century is opening upon an unbeaten track that, I should be loth to believe, is not trending upward. Scan the horizon. No Napoleon or Bismarck towers. Even they, to borrow the great figure of Lucretius, are pygmies when seen from the neighbouring hilltop. Is the great world any the worse off because the average stature of men is more even, and because men and women are less anxious to follow a lead and more keen to march abreast?

I have indicated in these papers doubts—suggested by Lord Morley's inspiring notes—whether the outlook, especially so far as our own country concerns us, does not indicate a new ordering of ideas very different from those that historical artists will paint upon the tapestries of the nineteenth century. Parliamentary Government, Nationality, Individualism, are the orthodox master-words of the publicist writing hard for his life of the immediate past or the immediate present. I have ventured to suggest that they are unlikely to prove the key-words of the immediate future. Goethe's advice to all as they grow old was to "act as if life had just begun." May we not as a people speaking one language and with a glorious history, but as a community grown old, endeavour to think as if life had just begun? Then, perhaps, with all our racial genius for practical action, we may find our social habits transformed, and our political institutions remoulded, in tune with the dreams of men young enough to believe that the track is all upward.

THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE.*

THERE is so fine a flavour about voluntary effort, so exhilarating an atmosphere about the men and women who sacrifice time and wealth, and sometimes life itself, in the voluntary service of others, that it seems sacrilegious to think of substituting for it the flat and commonplace rule of compulsion. Charity has been so highly esteemed that it has served as a cloak for most of the sins of the world; but charity in that sense—not the virtue which induces most men who are not politicians to think fairly well of their neighbours—is dying a slow death as the shadow of compulsion creeps over our national life. No imaginative politician, no practical citizen, no one, in fact, but a dry theorist, would dream of substituting compulsion for voluntary effort so long as the latter could be relied upon to produce average results, whether in education, sanitation, or military service. When, however, as education spreads, common men awaken to their duties and responsibilities, and when national risks, military and commercial, appear to them as risks which not only the rich and great but they themselves have to run, security, whether in the shape of sound teaching,

* Published in the *National Review*, September, 1910.

hygiene in its protective forms, or armed force, appears to them to be a matter of vital concern, and not of casual inclination. Forty years ago voluntary schooling was abandoned as an educational principle, and parents were obliged by law to send their children to school. These children are now grown men, and they look with different eyes upon the various forms of compulsion which have crept into our political system, and which culminated in the compulsory grant of an old-age pension and in compulsory insurance against illness and unemployment. The voluntary principle and the compulsory principle are both quite common in our mixed institutions, and it must be difficult for a foreigner to differentiate precisely where they overlap. Justice is administered half by volunteer judges and half by paid professionals. Lunatic asylums are maintained by compulsory taxation; hospitals by voluntary contribution. From some diseases men and women must be protected by force, whether they like it or not; other, and no less terrible, diseases they are free to spread with that full degree of liberty which is the proud boast of the British race.

These somewhat trite reflections are necessary, because it may be too readily assumed that to express a doubt of the complete success of the voluntary principle as applied to military preparedness for war, or for national defence, necessarily implies that one is in favour of conscription. Logic is a weakness which has nothing to do with

the matter in hand. If question there be of alternatives, it is not one of choice, but of necessity.

Someone said in a moment of trifling that force is no remedy, and the phrase has been quoted as dogma ever since, although everybody knows that nine times out of ten force is the only possible remedy. Two of the many problems awaiting solution by Britons all over the world is where and when the voluntary principle has failed, and whether "voluntaryism" is compatible with "democracy" in the functional activities of a modern State.

When Englishmen were ruled and did not govern themselves, it seemed quite in accordance with the settled order of things that a select few should do the work of the many. The oligarchic methods of the Whig Party triumphant in 1688 were only destroyed, as Lord Beaconsfield pointed out, by Mr. Gladstone two centuries later. The interval was the age of voluntary effort. The British Empire, as we know it, is the outcome of the voluntary principle. It found high exponents in men of the type of Clive and Cecil Rhodes. With volunteer armies, and by volunteer finance, these men and their likes acquired India, huge portions of Africa, and countless islands—in short, the British Empire of to-day.

There was a moment, in the course of the great struggle with Napoleon, when Mr. Pitt—who did not happen to be a Whig—faltered, and when, amidst a huge agglomeration of mercenary troops

and volunteer commandos, we obtain a glimpse of "compulsion" both in pressing men into the navy, and balloting for soldiers for the military defence of our shores. This was a mere spasm, born of fright, and England soon afterwards sank wearily and not uncontentedly back into the arms of her Whig statesmen. In point of fact, we have lived splendidly and comfortably under an oligarchy and under a voluntary system. The Houses of Parliament, filled with men giving up their time gratis to the nation, the magistracy of the counties and boroughs, the vast number of citizens acting as jurors, the men and women devoted to the care of educating village children, or supervising hospitals, the enormous sums spent in almsgiving in manifold shapes—all these were manifestations of the voluntary principle in its most wholesome form.

Great Britain thrived under this dispensation. She stood for liberty at home, and freedom in Europe, and her wealth and power increased with the spread of Empire, until she became, as Burke said, the arbitress of Europe, and, as Burke did not live to say, the greatest world-power, except Rome, that the world has ever seen. No man in his senses could desire, in order to square with some theory of government or live up to some political dogma, to change a system so rooted in our habits, and so beneficial to the nation in its results; but forces were at work, even in the most halcyon of these oligarchic days, which changed the old order, and brought about the inception of the new.

There came the Reform Bill of 1832. Is there any one simple enough to suppose that the Whigs who carried that Bill enjoyed the task? Is there anyone who believes that Mr. Disraeli liked the Reform Bill of 1866 any better than Lord Salisbury liked it? In those years the system of government had broken down, and these statesmen were forced by stress of circumstances to alter the institutions of the country, just as in 1846 Sir Robert Peel was constrained, by the failure of "Protection," to meet the difficulties of the transformation of an agricultural into an industrial population, and to adopt the theories of the Manchester school, and to swallow Free Trade. Yet who can truthfully say that he enjoyed the operation, or did more than bow to the inevitable result of causes which were beyond his control? As the franchise was lowered, and political power became more disseminated, the principle of compulsion became more extended, and voluntary effort more restricted. Upon the Reform Bill of 1866 there followed the Education Act of 1870. When the franchise is again lowered, then upon manhood suffrage will follow, in all probability, compulsory military service.

The unpopularity of free military service, as well as gratuitous service of any kind to the State, becomes more marked with the advance of "democracy." No one is more suspicious than the plebeian. He believes that he has been exploited for centuries by the wealthier classes, and he attributes the most sinister motives to the man

who is not in his direct pay or employ. Any man who works without emolument for the good of the public he associates with lay preachers of the Established Church, or with its female votaries, performing acts of charity on behalf of the Primrose League. I speak from experience, for, owing to circumstances, I have nearly all my life, with one pleasant interlude, held the disagreeable position of an unsalaried worker. I remember well, when I was very young, lecturing upon history on behalf of my University in a London slum, and having been guilty of some rather didactic observations on patriotism, a man in the audience rose and asked how much I was paid for my lecture. On my admission that I was not considered worthy of an emolument, he retorted, "Then ye are only a preacher," and left the room. It was the revolt of the honest democrat against a species of blackleg.

I have noticed the same kind of attack lately made by members of the House of Commons, and by a certain type of journalist, upon unsalaried and so-called irresponsible servants of the State. They are quite within their right, for it is obvious that, under a democratic form of government, the only hold upon a man, the only security you have for his honourable performance of duty, is a salary and the power to dock it. Disinterestedness, patriotism, even self-respect, are mere words of archaic meaning. There was a growing demand in some quarters for the payment

of members of Parliament. This demand has been conceded. Objection to unsalaried, and therefore irresponsible, magistrates will presently lead to the universal stipendiary. The County Councils, the County Associations, their chairmen and financial committees, will sooner or later be the subject of attack on the ground that the "people" have no proper hold over them. And thus, gradually, voluntary service in civil walks of life will disappear. How, then, can the principle be maintained in regard to military service? No doubt the circumstances differ materially in some respects. For the mass of those engaged in it military service does not, and never can, provide a career. To be efficient it must always remain a phase of youth. In this respect it resembles what is called education. In order to fight well a man must be hardy and strong, and, above all, he must be young. Under our present system we purchase annually, for the Regular Army, in peace, the bones and muscles and youth of about 30,000 of our countrymen. We keep them a few years, in case war should come, and we throw them away, and take in a fresh supply. In war we purchase their blood. In addition to the Regular or oversea Army, we succeed in getting, by persuasion, the unpaid voluntary service of the Territorial Force. If the piece of organization conceived and brought into existence by Lord Haldane, worked as it was intended to work, we should require about 60,000 of these Territorial recruits every year. His

scheme provided that after about four years' service Territorial soldiers should pass into a Territorial Reserve, and this building up of a reserve of trained men was the essence of the plan. It is the only method of what is called mobilizing the force—that is, of enabling it to take the field in full strength, and the only method of making good, in the event of war, losses from sickness or from battle. For this plan to work well it is essential that about one-fifth of a total of 315,000 men should pass into the reserve every year. For this reason about 60,000 recruits are annually required. In order, therefore, to provide a fighting machine of the size we nominally possess to-day, including Regulars and Territorials—that is to say, in order that on the summons of war about 600,000 men should stand armed all over the Empire, men born and bred in Great Britain, and not Colonial or Indian troops, something under 100,000 recruits are annually required.

That Lord Haldane should have gone so near achieving such a result is a remarkable feat, and when it is remembered that he has brought into being the machinery, the framework, and the motive power in the shape of what is called a "General Staff," to enable such a force to be used in war, he has done for England eminent service. The country, by the voice of Parliament, sanctioned this organization, and Parliament and the Press lauded it very properly, and appeared satisfied that a force, so organized, and of the strength proposed,

with a "reserve" behind it, which, in a few years, would mount up to a million of men trained to arms, would suffice for the needs of the Empire. If that is so, all that the ordinary citizen is concerned with is to see that the men are forthcoming in the numbers required.

The training and efficiency of such a force are matters for experts, and with the training and efficiency of this force military experts appear from their public statements to be satisfied. The ordinary citizen knows very little of the subject. But the question of numbers any one can understand. Lord Haldane has always recognized, and everybody must agree with him, that the numerical test is the real test of the voluntary system; and it has been admitted over and over again that if the present scheme fails from want of men, no tinkering, no new scheme of Army Reform, no politician or soldier, however eloquent or distinguished, is going to alter or amend it with success. Lord Haldane's plan was always considered, and unquestionably is, the final test of the system of maintaining an adequate armed force by means of paid and unpaid volunteers.

The facts are now before the world. There is no secret about them. All the returns of figures are available, and anyone can draw the inference. We are not obtaining the annual supply of young men that we require to make the plan work in its completeness. There have been times when it was exceedingly difficult to get the 30,000 recruits

wanted for the Regular Army. Sometimes those responsible were almost in despair. On the whole, however, the supply has been fairly obtained. But at present there is no sign that the 60,000 required annually for the Territorial Force will be forthcoming. All the portents are adverse. There is no steady increase, no advance. There is in many cases retrogression.

I am not going to discuss the manifold causes and excuses which are suggested to account for this main and incontrovertible fact. Nor am I going to discuss remedies. According to some, they resolve themselves into hard cash. By adding so many millions to the cost of the Territorial Force, some competent judges believe that the supply of men could be obtained. It may be so. It may be that the youth and muscle, and possibly the blood of so many of our fellow-citizens can be bought for three and a half millions of pounds sterling, and that a greater quantity can be bought for five or six millions of pounds sterling. It looks plausible. But it is by no means certain. There may be deeper causes at work. It may be that the higher standard of skill and training required from the modern soldier, if he is to be of any use, the greater and unavoidable physical strain placed upon him in peace exercises, and the fiercer commercial competition between his employers, act adversely upon the instinct, for it cannot be given any other name, which induces the young civilian worker to practise the profession of arms. Or,

again, it may be the sirocco of democracy withering in our people the spirit of sacrifice.

There are many of us who have laboured hard to bring success to Lord Haldane's imaginative and practical organization of the Territorial Forces of our country. There are many of us who will relax no effort to recruit and administer these forces; but it would be cowardice and an act of treachery to the nation, ill-informed and lethargic as it is, if those engaged in this task were to shrink from speaking what they believe to be true, or from expressing candid opinions, however unpalatable. No one can contend that this is a case when the truth, if truth it be, is best unspoken. Of course, the pessimistic view may prove to be an error of judgment, but in that case what harm is done, for it is childish to maintain that so insignificant a thing as the expression of an erroneous opinion could check the growth of the Territorial Force, if the youth of the country were seriously bent upon serving in its ranks. If that were so, the basis upon which the Home Army rests would be frail indeed. On the other hand, the view that we have reached the limit of the nation's yield for the Territorial Force may be true, and if so, what graver decision lies before the people than to choose between leaving the forces of the country below the minimum admitted by everyone to be necessary and imposing by law upon our children the duty to bear arms in its defence.

THE COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE *

ITS FUNCTIONS AND POTENTIALITIES

Our national institutions are the outcome of slow processes of national and Imperial requirements as they arise, and have never emanated from the brain of the theorist. Government by Cabinet is an illustration of this. The origin and evolution of the Committee of Imperial Defence is another.

The rise of a great Sea Power in competition with the British Navy—that force upon which, hitherto, the security of Great Britain and of the British Empire has rested—has rendered imperative the consideration of Imperial Defence as a problem which cannot be solved by Great Britain alone. Statesmanship has before it the choice between Foreign alliances, and a practical federation of the Empire for purposes of common defence. The matter is urgent and a decision cannot be postponed.

National safety and national dignity indicate the right path. Mr. Borden has said that Canada cannot and will not be a mere adjunct of Great Britain.

* A lecture delivered at the United Service Institution on March 20, 1912, with the Chief of the General Staff, General Sir John French, G.C.B., in the chair.

The other Dominions would re-echo this statement. It is a condition of the problem that this country has to solve. It means that mutual help between the component parts of the Empire demands mutual confidence and a common responsibility for Foreign Affairs.

If the functions and potentialities of the Committee of Imperial Defence are clearly grasped the problem is not insoluble.

Two conditions are essential: first, that there should be no concealment of policy or intentions between the Prime Minister of this country and the Prime Ministers of the Dominions.

The second, that no new departure in Foreign Policy, involving Imperial interests, should be taken without the approval of the Dominions.

In order to achieve these results some modification of practice in the government of this country and of the Dominions would be necessary. Some concessions would have to be made; some sacrifice of old-fashioned pride on the one hand, and some abandonment of exaggerated independence on the other.

British Ministers should realize that they cannot be free and untrammelled in future to choose a Foreign Policy which may land the Empire in war, and expect material help from Canada; while Canadians should understand that, if they desire to fly the Union Jack, they must face the fact that Great Britain is a European Power, and be ready to shoulder a share of the European burden.

Although the shrinkage of the world increases rapidly, I do not believe that time and distance would, at present, permit of constant and adequate representation of the Dominions upon the Committee of Imperial Defence, if by that is meant the attendance of Dominion representatives at every important meeting of the Committee.

The only adequate representation of a Great Dominion is its Prime Minister.

For this reason I suggest, as the first step, complete confidence and free communication between the British and Canadian Prime Ministers upon all first-class questions of Foreign Policy. Annual visits, or biennial visits, to London in July, to be followed by a series of meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence, in order to ventilate and deal with technical questions, would be an admirable development and sufficient for our present needs. It would test the strength of our Imperial bonds.

There is, however, a condition precedent, and a necessary step antecedent to this. It is to establish confidence and communication between our Prime Minister, as Chairman of the Imperial Defence Committee, and Mr. Borden, as Chairman of the Canadian Defence Committee.

Mr. Asquith possesses in the Secretariat of the Committee of Imperial Defence a special Bureau, well qualified for this purpose. The Secretariat of the Committee is the private and public Bureau of the Prime Minister.

Indian Administrators are aware of the impor-

tance of the weekly "Private and Confidential" letters that pass between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India. Although Members of the Indian Councils may be reluctant to admit the fact, it nevertheless remains that the vital and crucial business of the Indian Empire is discussed and settled by this "Private and Confidential" correspondence.

That is the model and precedent which might be adopted and followed by the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and Canada, as a first step towards closer union.

Cabinet Ministers may not like the suggestion. It is another illustration of the unpalatable thesis with which I have attempted to deal in this Lecture, that the status of a Cabinet Minister, relative to the Prime Minister, has changed and is changing.

We cannot revert to the practice of Lord Liverpool. The Prime Minister to-day must inevitably become more and more an Imperial Chancellor. He will be forced to devolve the conduct of business in Parliament more and more upon his colleagues. He will be forced to trench more and more upon the functions of the Foreign Secretary, the Colonial and Indian Secretaries of State, and the First Lord of the Admiralty.

The day cannot now be far distant when the affairs of the Colonial Office should be relieved of the affairs of the Dominions.

The Colonial Office, in that sphere, is an anachronism. Every consideration points to the

Bureau of the Prime Minister, to the Secretariat of the Committee of Imperial Defence, as the suitable machinery for keeping Great Britain and the Dominions in touch, and as a means of establishing more intimate, more confidential, and more binding relations between the Mother Country and the Dominions, which very shortly will surpass her in population and wealth as they do already in area and extent.

In order to federate more or less independent groups of men of the same race and speech, some menace is required to their pride and independence.

The Chauvinism of the Napoleonic tradition, and the French spirit of *Revanche*, federated and have kept together the German Empire.

Bismarck, far-seeing, of *esprit positif*, found in Alsace-Lorraine the instrument he required to hold together the South and North German peoples.

His successors have provided us with a weapon equally potent for our purposes. No British statesman could have federated the British Empire. That object may, however, be accomplished by the menace of the German Fleet.

I have been interested all my life in the study of naval and military matters, and I have been deeply concerned, during the past sixteen or seventeen years, in the organization of the military forces of the Crown; but I wish to preface what I have to say by the general statement that no man who has regard for the individual or collective happiness and prosperity of his fellow-countrymen can look upon

war otherwise than as the greatest of all curses, and naval and military preparation for war otherwise than as the most odious of all necessities.

It is a deep-rooted fallacy in the minds of men that a study of the past throws clear light upon the conduct of public affairs, whether the question be naval, military, or civil, or whether the time be the present or the immediate future. In reality, the light thus thrown is dim and uncertain. Although human nature may be unchanging and unchangeable—and even this is doubtful—what is called the advance of science and the ever-widening scope of human knowledge render the lessons of the past only partially applicable to present needs and conditions.

It is only a half-truth to say that the invention of gunpowder influenced tactics, but did not materially influence strategy in war. It is altogether fallacious to suppose that the shrinkage of the world brought about by scientific invention and the interlacing of commercial relations between all civilized peoples have not profoundly influenced both the course and the results of war itself. After all, what is war? It is the final struggle for supremacy, for the supremacy of one man or body of men, or a nation, over others. In former times the struggle was limited to those whom victory specially concerned, and it did not concern every inhabitant of a town or every native of a country.

There are portions of our own Empire to-day where defeat and conquest would only mean, to the

common people, the substitution of one set of masters for another. War nowadays, between great European States, means a struggle not only between bands of armed men, upon which the masses of the people can look, comparatively speaking, immune and unaffected, but it means a contest in which every individual member of a nation is unavoidably concerned, and in which his material welfare is jeopardized.

I am not referring only to conflict between nations in arms, and I have not in mind only conscript forces. If Great Britain were at war tomorrow with a first-class European Power the welfare of every individual Englishman would be quite as much at stake, although Great Britain is not a nation in arms, as would be the welfare of every individual member of a country which had the conscript law.

In a prolonged struggle, or even in a struggle of short duration, between two great Empires, many other forces come into play other than those immediately within the orbit of the clash of arms; and these forces have a trenchant bearing upon the issue.

What, for example, were the underlying causes that brought about the cessation of the war between Russia and Japan? The ostensible causes were the victories of the Japanese fleet at Tsushima and of the Japanese armies at Mukden. But was Russia in reality a defeated nation, and was there any real danger to the solidarity of the Russian Empire from

local defeat in a theatre of war so distant as Manchuria from Moscow and from St. Petersburg? Were the armies of Russia crushed and destroyed as were those of Prussia after Jena? Speaking purely from the strategical point of view, was the victory of Togo at Tsushima more complete than the victory of Nelson at Trafalgar, and was Russia more crippled by naval defeat in 1903 than was France in 1805? Were the Russian armies more broken after Mukden than were their predecessors just one hundred years ago when Napoleon entered Moscow?

We know that France was not driven to make peace with Great Britain after Trafalgar; and, in spite of Napoleon's victorious advance, Russia did not make peace in 1812. What then, as I have asked, were the underlying causes which brought about the Peace of Portsmouth?

I do not propose to explore them, but I refer to them for the purpose of suggesting to you that war to-day between two great nations, hampered for military purposes by their civilization, cannot be fought under the confined conditions of a century ago, nor is it likely that ever again a great European war will be fought out to a finish. If I am right, and if this hypothesis is true as regards a war carried on in a theatre so distant from the main arteries of Russian and Japanese life as was Manchuria, how infinitely more true it must be of any great war of which the theatre is Central Europe, or the narrow European seas which are the com-

mercial highway of the civilized world! These speculations, with all their infinite suggestion of commercial disaster, of financial ruin, and of individual suffering, appear so pregnant with restraining influences that I confess it seems to me almost unthinkable that Great Britain, or Germany, or France should ever again in cold blood let loose upon each other the forces of war.

It would be folly, however, and criminal folly, to ignore the element of passion. Men are not, unfortunately, governed by reason alone. Napoleon said that imagination rules the world, and imagination often runs riot, and is frequently misdirected.

Even though the odds are heavy against a war between any two or more of the great nations of Europe, there is always left in reserve the odd chance.

I remember, many years ago, at a dinner-party, hearing Mr. Gladstone declaim, with all the force of his immense vocabulary, and with great array of statistical facts, against the folly of those citizens of London who were in the habit of insuring their houses against fire. He showed by figures that were incontestable both as regards the number of conflagrations, the rapidity with which incipient fire was extinguished by the admirable activity of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, and he proved by the comparatively few cases of damage to the property of the ordinary householder, that a man who was content under these circumstances to pay annual

premiums which amounted during an average life to a considerable sum was a man deficient in moral courage and a thoroughly bad economist. Yet that very night there was probably a fire in London, and it would have been a poor consolation to the unhappy householder, standing amid the ruins of his property, to feel that, in spite of his catastrophic losses, he had vindicated the principles of economy and of moral courage.

This is an attempt to illustrate the first point which I desire to make.

We are sometimes told that vast preparation for war, expansive and burdensome, crushing down the full expansive commercial activities of a nation, inflicting hardship upon every individual man or woman and child composing a nation, is unnecessary, and is economically unsound, because the economic results of defeat to the individual are not so heavy as the economic weight of preparation.

This I honestly believe to be true, and, if men were governed by economic considerations alone, would furnish an unanswerable reason for abandoning preparations for war.

Men, and nations of men, however, are the slaves of passion and of unreason, and the great drama of war often moves within a sphere from which man's imagination excludes all considerations of prudence. There is always the odd chance in reserve, and there is always the haunting possibility of the ancestral house and home in ruins.

Given, then, that preparation for war is a high

premium which every nation governed by wisdom and forethought is bound to pay for insurance against possibly tragic disaster, it surely follows that preparation, which is bound to be expensive in any case, should be as complete as it can be made, so that the co-ordinated forces of a nation can be concentrated at the critical moment upon the enemy.

This brings me to my second point.

What are the forces which an adequate scheme of preparation should co-ordinate, and what is the best and surest method of co-ordinating them?

I wish to say, at this juncture, that we cannot avoid taking, for the purposes of discussion, the constitution of our country as we find it, and also the British Empire under the conditions in which we know it to-day. Analogies between our own system of government and methods which can satisfactorily be applied under other systems of government, whether in the past or on the Continent of Europe, can only be misleading, and I ask you to disregard them.

Our country and our Empire are not ruled in a vacuum, but under conditions which some of us may deplore, but which in the main we are obliged to accept. These conditions impose upon statesmen, upon eminent civil servants, upon the Lords of the Admiralty, and upon the General Staff of the Army, limitations which many would be glad to be free from, and which all would desire in some respects to modify. These limitations, however,

are for the present so firmly fixed that it would be foolish to ignore them, and hopeless to contend against them.

The limitations I refer to are—

First, that our system of government is based upon the representation of the People's will, and carries with it, by tradition, the custom of explaining fully, and in public, the reasons justifying expenditure of money, and the necessity of obtaining thereto the assent of Parliament. Second, that the great Dominions oversea are not, except so far as sentiment is concerned, integral portions of the British Empire, but are in reality self-governing States, in alliance with Great Britain.

It follows, therefore, when we come to consider the most effective method of preparing for war, and for campaigns, whether by sea or land, that we are constrained to frame plans in accordance with our Parliamentary institutions, and with our heterogeneous Imperial system. If any drastic change is contemplated, involving the rearrangement of our State Departments, the first question a reformer has to ask himself is whether the approval of the House of Commons is likely to be obtained.

And likewise, if any strategic plan is formulated by those whose duty it is to make preparation for war involving united Imperial effort, the first question they have to ask themselves is whether such a plan is likely to commend itself to the self-governing Dominions.

These are the conditions and limitations which

have to be borne in mind, and from the trammels of which we cannot at present escape.

When, therefore, we come to consider the means for co-ordinating the fighting and defensive forces of the Empire, it will be seen that a plan, Napoleonic in scope and design, and resting upon a centralized basis, would not at present be practically feasible.

We shall, so far as we can see, for many years to come have to be content with a scheme of co-ordination that leaves financial control in peace time, subject to Ministerial responsibility, as devised under our parliamentary system of Government, and leaves to the Dominions a degree of freedom from naval and military control that is unquestionably incompatible with the highest naval and military efficiency.

I will try to illustrate what I mean by two examples.

It has been often suggested that the naval and military forces of the Crown could be wielded more effectively in war if they were organized in peace under a sole Minister responsible for both services. The Dominions have carried this idea into practice. They most of them possess a Minister of Defence, controlling their armaments, and parcelling out such sums as may be voted by their Parliaments between their maritime and land forces.

A strong and capable Minister, suspended midway between the Admiralty and the War Office, responsible for the total expenditure of both

services, able to gather together the Chiefs of the Naval War Staff and of the Military General Staff whenever he wished round a common table, planning secretly and surely the joint action of sea and land power, for purposes of offence and defence, is a captivating idea. To an audience like this I need hardly dwell upon its advantages. Not the least of these would be the disappearance of that rivalry for the favour of the Exchequer between two Cabinet Ministers which has so often led to economical results highly unsatisfactory to the taxpayer, putting a premium, so to speak, upon lavish expenditure without any effective increase of aggregate naval and military strength.

Whatever the advantages, however, might be of concentrating upon one Minister the duty of providing those naval and military forces adequate to the needs of the country, it is hardly improbable that any Prime Minister could be found willing to propose to the House of Commons a reform so alien to the trend of our most recent methods of government.

Decentralization rather than the converse, spreading of responsibility, especially financial responsibility, rather than its concentration, have in modern times been the main characteristics of change in our institutions.

As the wealth, the Imperial responsibilities, the commercial activities of the country, have increased, coupled with the growth of education and the widening of the franchise, it has been found necessary

to lighten the burden of Ministers and of the departments of State by increasing both. Parliament found that it was losing control over Ministers and Civil Servants, the complexity and mass of whose work hindered them from giving minute attention to detail.

The result has been a gradual increase in the number of public offices and public bodies.

To attempt to concentrate upon the head of a single Minister responsibility for the Admiralty and the War Office, however desirable for reasons of strategy in war, would be to reverse the natural process that has been in operation for more than seventy years—I mean since the first Reform Bill of 1832.

Another consideration, impossible to disregard, is the evolution of the office of Prime Minister. The status of the Prime Minister in the hierarchy of government has changed. Cabinets, in the old days, were composed of a comparatively small number of statesmen, bound together by political ties, and were presided over by one of their body, called sometimes the First Lord of the Treasury, and sometimes the First Minister of the Crown. Cabinet Ministers in those days were jealous of their individual authority, and highly sensitive on the subject of their constitutional equality. Any Cabinet Minister could, for example, call a Cabinet Meeting, and frequently did so, often to the annoyance of his nominal chief. This privilege is now practically obsolete. With the increased size of Cabinets,

and the immense growth of Departmental business, accentuated by the heavier work of the House of Commons and by public curiosity stimulated by the Press, the old-time system has passed away, leaving the Prime Minister in a position resembling rather what on the Continent is called an Imperial Chancellor than a First Lord of the Treasury of the early Victorian type.

It was curiously symptomatic of the change that had taken place in the status of the Prime Minister when, as you will recollect, only a few years ago a special and high social precedence was granted by the Sovereign to that office. It is hardly conceivable that any Prime Minister trained in the political atmosphere of to-day, accustomed to his commanding position in the Councils of the Sovereign and of the nation, imbued clearly with a sense of his full Imperial responsibility for the security of the State, would abrogate one of his chief functions and place it in the hands of a colleague.

I say this because I think it is obvious that every modern Prime Minister must perceive that he, and he alone, is the Minister whose function it is to co-ordinate and to prepare all the forces of the Empire in time of peace and to launch them at the enemy in time of war.

The method by which the Prime Minister to-day has co-ordinated these forces I will revert to when I have touched for a few moments upon what I said, a short while ago, that we must abandon to the Dominions a certain freedom of attitude and action,

both in peace and in war, although at the expense of the highest naval and military efficiency.

No one who has read the reports of what occurred at the Imperial Conferences, summoned from time to time in London, and has watched the attitude of the Dominion Parliaments, can be under any illusion about the nature of the ties between the Mother Country and the self-governing communities that form part of the British Empire.

These ties are in the main sentimental, and, although there have been indications that the Dominions are not unwilling to take part in defending the Empire against attack, any attempt to formulate strategic plans, based on common action, would be premature, and might not impossibly prove to be disastrous.

There is no immediate prospect of the British Executive Government being able to impose its ideas of naval or military strategy upon the Defence Ministers of the Dominions, and still less of the British Parliament being able to control or even to influence the action of the Dominion Parliaments. For purposes of Imperial Defence the Empire is not a federation, but an alliance between greater and lesser States upon terms not so clearly defined as those which subsist between some of the States of Europe.

For the present these conditions have to be accepted by those responsible for the government of this country, and the war-plans of the naval and

military staffs are obliged to be framed in accordance with them.

It is by no means a satisfactory state of things, but there is no help for it, until the Dominions realize more fully that their security from attack, during the long period which is bound to elapse before they attain to maturity in population and wealth, is inextricably bound up with the security of Great Britain.

This truth is only at present half understood.

The Dominions are very much inclined to hold language which, if it means anything, implies that they reserve to themselves the power to declare *ad hoc*, on the outbreak of war, whether they will take their full share of responsibility as belligerents.

That any of the Dominions would, in the event of a great war, leave the Mother Country in the lurch is highly improbable; but they are not prepared at the present time to bind themselves to any specific joint plan of action under circumstances over which they have no control, in spite of the obvious Imperial difficulty and danger of leaving the principles of common action to be determined at the last moment, on the eve of war.

This is the second example I desire to give of the kind of difficulties which a statesman has to face who is anxious to perfect a system of war-preparation in a country like ours, governed under a constitution which places individual liberty, and its full expression, before all other considerations, and in an Empire like ours, of which the com-

ponent parts are bound together by ties of sentiment and not by material guarantees.

And now I must ask you to consider, for a few moments, the methods by which Prime Ministers, and especially the present Prime Minister,* have recently tried to co-ordinate those national and Imperial forces which would have to be brought into operation if the Empire is to put out its full strength in the event of a great war.

It is not sufficiently realized yet that, during the last decade, the attitude of the official mind in this country towards questions of national defence has undergone a revolutionary change. Students of our parliamentary history are well aware that these matters only engage the attention of Parliament and of the country by fits and starts. Up to the year 1904 even statesmen shrank from applying their minds consistently to problems of defence. A distinct change for the better then occurred. Mr. Balfour's Administration must always be memorable in the history of national defence for two reforms pregnant of far-reaching results. Mr. Balfour created a General Staff for the Army, and he gave body and substance to the Committee of Imperial Defence.

What is the Committee of Imperial Defence? It is often referred to, sometimes with a kind of awe, sometimes with malice not untinged with contempt. It had its origin many years ago in the mind of Lord Salisbury, when, in a well-remem-

* The Right Hon. H. H. Asquith.

bered phrase, he suggested to his fellow-countrymen that they should study large maps before discussing questions of Imperial Strategy. Much later in life he crystallized this notion and drew together representatives of the Admiralty and the War Office in a small committee, under the presidency of the late Duke of Devonshire, for the purpose of studying large maps and strategical questions. This committee was accustomed to meet at the Foreign Office, and the services of a Foreign Office clerk were placed at its disposal.

There were no regular meetings, and no records were kept of its deliberations or decisions. Its existence was shadowy, but it contained the germs of the present Committee of Imperial Defence.

After the War Office Reconstitution Committee had finally reported to Mr. Balfour, that Minister immediately gave effect to one of its most vital recommendations, and a permanent secretariat was instituted for the Committee of Imperial Defence. It was the first step in the evolution of that body. Mr. Balfour's object was to establish a permanent advisory committee on defence questions, and, by giving it a secretariat, to ensure that its deliberations and decisions should be carefully preserved, and a continuity of practice maintained. The theory enunciated by Mr. Balfour—and his theory coincided with his practice—was that the Committee should only meet when summoned by the Prime Minister, who was its only permanent member. He summoned the Committee when he

chose, and he summoned to it whomsoever he pleased. This theory is still in vogue, and has been endorsed on several occasions by the present Prime Minister. In point of fact, Mr. Balfour himself destroyed his own conception of the Committee when he appointed to serve upon it two permanent members who were habitually summoned to attend its meetings.

Accidentally this new departure led to invaluable developments, and further important changes were made by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and quite notably by Mr. Asquith.

The late Prime Minister initiated a plan of appointing sub-committees to enquire into and report upon strategic and technical questions, with authority to call witnesses and to take shorthand notes of evidence. This changed at once the status of the Committee, and widened its scope of operative labours.

The discussions of the full Committee were preluded by what may be called scientific inquiry. Mr. Asquith went a step further. He noted, after a very short experience, that in preparation for war every department of State was concerned.

He proceeded, therefore, to summon the heads or representatives of many of the great public Departments to attend these sub-committees, and more recently he established a Standing Sub-Committee, to be presided over alternately by the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War, and composed of representatives of the

Admiralty and War Office, the Foreign Office, the Board of Trade, the Customs, and indeed all the great Departments, for the purpose of co-ordinating in war the Naval, Military, and Civil Forces of the State. This Standing Sub-Committee was instructed to constantly review and revise its own recommendations.

I am permitted, in order to give you some idea of the subjects with which this Committee deals beyond the scope of the more obvious naval and military problems, to mention that its enquiries have ranged over such matters as Aerial Navigation, the strategical aspects of the Forth and Clyde Canal, oversea transport of reinforcements in time of war, the treatment of aliens in time of war, press censorship in war, postal censorship in war, trading with the enemy, wireless stations throughout the Empire, local transportation and distribution of food supplies in time of war, etc.

To unravel the complicated meshes of matters such as these is a work of peculiar difficulty. It requires experienced handling, and no single Minister with the usual official staff would be equal to the task.

This is my final point. I mean that the co-ordination of the material forces of the country for war is not the sole concern of the Admiralty and the War Office, but includes in its active sphere almost every branch of civil administration; and further, that the conditions under which all the forces of the Empire can be co-ordinated are constantly changing.

It follows that, whether for purposes of war-preparation in time of peace, or whether for the purpose of taking those initial steps in war which decide its theatre and objectives, the supreme co-ordinating authority can only be the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, who are responsible to Parliament.

The Prime Minister cannot abdicate this function, perhaps the most important one of his high office, and for this purpose the Defence Committee acts as his bureau or department.

It must never be forgotten that the duties of the Committee of Imperial Defence are purely advisory. That Committee has no executive authority, and under our present institutions it never could possess any. It exists for the purpose of enquiry and advice, with the object of examining into every branch of Imperial Defence under ever-changing conditions, and for the purpose of placing conclusions and evidence in support of them at the disposal of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

Under our constitutional forms of government, and with our well-established parliamentary traditions, it is certainly the best and most effective method for focussing in war national and Imperial effort which can at present be devised.

To sum up:

1. War between European nations, because of their interdependence and because of the interlacing of national life, becomes every day more difficult and improbable.

2. Just as wars on the Continent of Europe, lasting Thirty or even Seven years, have become impossible, so war of any kind in the same sphere tends to become more difficult and unlikely.

3. For many years yet, however, the chances of supreme acts of folly, due to sentiment and passion, remain a constant factor of national existence, so that it would be criminal to be unprepared for war.

4. Whether for conscript peoples or for Great Britain, success in war depends upon the prudent co-ordination in peace of all the material forces of the nation.

5. These forces are not only naval and military, but involve, for their full exercise, careful preparation and forethought by the great civilian branches of Administration and Government.

6. Bound as we are by parliamentary tradition, and owing to the looseness of our Imperial ties, the most effective method yet found for co-ordinating these forces is the Committee of Imperial Defence, acting, not as an executive body, but as a Standing Board of Advisers, at the disposal of the Prime Minister and of his Cabinet.

7. Finally, if I may be allowed to renew an aspiration which I expressed many years ago (I think it was in 1904 or 1905): it is that we may live to see the great Dominions sending annually their representatives to sit upon the Committee of Imperial Defence, and that thus a long step may be taken towards that federation of the Empire which has been the dream of patriots here and oversea.

NAVAL AND MILITARY SITUATION

I.

THAT the Mediterranean might have to be abandoned by Great Britain in view of the calls upon the Navy elsewhere is a new idea to the British people. Mr. Churchill's attempt to redistribute the Fleet, and his speech, in 1912, in reference to it, were both worth making, if only because they have brought home to the average Englishman, all over the Empire, more vividly than could have been done in any other manner, the effect upon our fortunes of the rise of German sea power. It would be an utter mistake to suppose that this question is one of nerves. It is, on the contrary, in the first place one of high naval strategy, and in the second place one of national prestige. A concentration of naval power in home waters is forced upon us by what is called the menace across the North Sea. The suddenness with which a war may break out in these days, and the difficulty of making stragetical movements of armed force during a period of tension, for fear of precipitating conflict, are factors which cannot be ignored. The initial naval action taken by Japan against Russia was not a surprise in the more usual sense of the term, but it was sufficiently sudden to induce those responsible for our

national safety carefully to consider what might happen in the event of a war between Great Britain and Germany. For Great Britain situated as she is—an insular Power dependent largely upon sea-borne trade—to be able to strike an overwhelming blow at sea at the earliest possible moment in self-defence is almost a condition of national independence. It is for this reason that Mr. Churchill's strategy of drawing together the main British Fleet in home waters in such strength that the German Fleet would practically have no chance of victory, cannot be questioned.

Owing, however, to circumstances of high policy, and to the fact that, so far as the Mediterranean is concerned, we have given hostages to fortune by possessing ourselves of the waterways to the East through the Canal of Suez, by undertaking the administration of Egypt, and by holding on to Malta, Gibraltar, and Cyprus, it had become impossible, without making too large a sacrifice, to lower the British flag in what is called the Middle Sea. It is indisputable that it would be convenient from the point of view of naval administration and from the point of view of finance, if we were able to withdraw in peace our ships and their crews from the Mediterranean for the purpose of rendering more rapid and more overwhelming the blow which we might unhappily be forced to deliver in home waters. The considerations, however, which render such a course unwise are too weighty. Putting aside the interests and feelings of the Dominions, we

cannot afford to ignore the effect which evacuation of the Mediterranean would produce upon our great dependencies and upon the Crown Colonies. What are called the subject races are mainly kept in subjection by faith in, and fear of, the British Raj. Shake that belief, and the edifice begins to crumble. The pivot of our military prestige throughout the East is the isthmus of Suez. The symbol of British power throughout the darker continents is the British flag as flown in the Mediterranean, whether upon fixed defences in Malta or Gibraltar or upon the Admiral's flagship at any point that this sea officer chooses between Malta and the Dardanelles. The man who has stood hitherto as the representative of British power outside these Islands, let us say between London and Calcutta, is the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean. You cannot safely ignore imagination in man, even though it may be weakness.

The presence of Napoleon in the field, the presence of Nelson with the Fleet, the presence of Lord Roberts in South Africa at the beginning of 1900, added incalculable moral strength to the material forces under their command. In peace, it is difficult to measure the diminution of the moral effect of Great Britain's diplomatic action all over those portions of the earth which have an interest for us if you minimize the authority and destroy the prestige of the British Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean.

Diplomatic influence in the Near East is not a

capricious thing, it is a constant factor in the every-day life of the British nation, and has to be exercised consistently, if the highest interests, commercial and political, of the people are to be safeguarded. Diplomatic influence, in order to be effective, must have behind it the potentiality of immediate action. The examples of this are numerous and well known. It is quite unnecessary to refer to demonstrations of naval force in the Middle Sea and of the seizure of an island or the movement of a fleet. They are the commonplaces of diplomatic history. When Mr. Churchill referred in his speech to the possibility of a British squadron, based on Gibraltar, moving to the north or to the east, as occasion might require, there were persons who believed that an adequate solution of the necessities of home defence, and the possible demands of diplomatic action in the Mediterranean, would be met by this expedient. When, however, the dilemma is pushed home, it will be found that if the services of a fleet based on Gibraltar are required for the purpose of rendering absolutely safe the naval position in home waters, it would be impossible to count upon that force for supporting British diplomacy, or for safeguarding British interests in the Mediterranean. You cannot earmark the Home Fleet for the double purpose.

Hitherto public men on the platform and in the Press have talked glibly of sea command, and have claimed for Great Britain overwhelming sea power as the main condition of her existence. They have failed, however, to define in clear and unmistakable

terms what sea command really means; and they have altogether failed to estimate the financial cost of maintaining it. We are at last coming to grips with this question, and the average Englishman all over the Empire has got clearly to understand that if the British Empire is to float on the British Navy, that Navy has got to be of immense size, concentrated in particular for the purpose of ensuring overwhelming superiority at the crucial point, and at the crucial moment, but distributed also over certain minor theatres of possible conflict.

This is the governing condition of a defensive policy that relies upon naval power alone for national security and independence. If this condition is ignored, or if the principle underlying it is tampered with, it would become necessary to reconsider the basic facts of our whole system of national defence. Great Britain possesses no army in the modern sense. That is to say, she is not a Nation in Arms. If the Mediterranean were to be evacuated, we should be driven to readapt our military system to new conditions.

II.

Great Britain possesses no army in the modern European sense. Some civilian authorities hold the contrary opinion, but they have never succeeded in convincing any soldier of the correctness of their view. An army, in a modern sense, means a military force sufficiently large to cope, upon something like equal terms, with any probable opponent. It means a military organization that, in peace, is complete in

the material required for entering upon a great war, and is in possession of a framework capable of being filled up on the outbreak of war with trained men and officers to its full war establishment. It means, in addition to this, reserves of men who have been accustomed to arms, and are physically fit to stand again in the ranks in order to make good what is called the wastage of war. A modern army of this kind, although it cannot be utilized outside its territorial boundaries in time of peace, must be able to be launched in war at the enemy at any point that national strategy may require. The armies of the Great Powers of Europe, and the armies of practically all the lesser Powers, fulfil these conditions. Switzerland and Great Britain are the only exceptions.

Whatever may have been the case up to 1906, it cannot be contended for a moment that since that date military organization in this country has not received careful consideration by highly competent minds. Whatever their view of these conclusions may be, Lord Haldane's countrymen cannot complain of his method of trying to solve our military problems. He has given the whole of his mind to their consideration, his assiduity has been wonderful, his tenacity unrelaxed, and he has taken into consultation the most competent men he could find, both soldiers and civilians. He has not stinted time or trouble.

His ultimate conclusions, upon which the organization of the army at the present time is based, have been explained over and over again. Although he claims to have created an army, he has always

stated that the foundations of his military system are laid upon the supremacy of the British Fleet at sea. Cut this foundation away, and the whole edifice crumbles. Supremacy at sea means two things. First, that the shores of these islands are secure from invasion; and, second, that our trade routes across the Atlantic, and eastward through the Suez Canal, cannot be interrupted. Subject to these safeguards, the British Army organization, as it is, with its present establishments and its present reserves, with the Territorial Force in this country, with its auxiliary forces of native troops all over the Empire, and assisted by the militia forces of the great Dominions, is adequate to our needs. That is the conclusion arrived at by Lord Haldane and his advisers as well as by the committee of experts which goes by the name of the Defence Committee, and it is a conclusion which has been accepted by the nation. If we stop there, and do not ask more from our land forces, not much fault can be found with their numbers or organization. It is true that the great authority of Lord Roberts may be quoted on the other side. There are many who are in agreement with him, but so far the sense of the nation has been with Lord Haldane and his military advisers.

The moment, however, that the attitude of the Admiralty changes, and the moment that our safety from invasion becomes an open question, or the security of our trade routes cannot be guaranteed, the problem of the British Army becomes a different one. There are many excellent and

patriotic people, holders of Liberal opinions, who seem unable to realize that a nation cannot enjoy simultaneously the wider atmosphere of being a first-class Power and the narrower comforts of being a second-class Power. If a nation happens to be situated in Europe, and is surrounded by other nations, all of which are armed to the teeth, and whose effectiveness in the discussion of European or World problems is dependent upon the dynamic force of the sword, it cannot expect to exercise at one moment the authority of a great Power like Germany or France, and at the same time possess that comparative immunity from attack which is the privilege of a protected Power like Belgium.

Since October 21, 1805, Great Britain has been a first-class world Power. She has exercised authority in the councils of Europe, and she has swayed the East. These objects have been achieved, primarily, because she possessed a Fleet the power of which was unquestioned, and a small but efficient Army capable of being used in conjunction with her Navy in such a manner as to render her *total* armed force of equal potency with that of any other great Power.

It is this delicate adjustment between the forces of the Navy and of the Army which has in recent years been the problem for Lord Haldane and military reformers. The fashion in which it has been solved is too well known to need description. We have now a fixed organization which provides these Islands with an expeditionary force composed of professional soldiers raised and trained for the

purpose of serving oversea in peace and war. The idea is that this force shall always be as efficient as it can be made by careful training and warlike material. It is highly trained and highly mobile. Should necessity require, it can be despatched at short notice to India or any part of the British Empire that is threatened. It is the adjunct of our sea power, and intended to strike the final blow which full effectiveness of sea power demands, and it is further intended to carry out the duties of police wherever necessity arises and wherever the central Government of Great Britain is responsible for the maintenance of order. These are the purposes for which it is intended and which it is adequate to fulfil. There are two uses to which our expeditionary force cannot safely be put. First, its size and strength do not permit its use in the field of battle against a Nation in Arms; and, second, it is too small to be safely employed in two theatres of war at the same time.

Lord Haldane has named what formerly was called the Regular Army an Expeditionary Force. Enough attention has not been given to this change of nomenclature. It is of first-rate importance that the people of this country should realize that they do not possess a "British Army" in the sense of 1815, or of the middle years of the last century. The British Army of the days of Wellington, and even of the Duke of Cambridge, has ceased to exist. This is not due to the acts or shortcomings of any British Government. It is due to causes wholly

external, and to the growth of forces over which no British Government has any control. That is to say, it is the outcome of the lesson given by Napoleon to the Prussians at Jena, which led, after a germinating period extending over sixty years, to the rout of the French at Sedan, and to the rise of Nations in Arms all over Europe. Great Britain possesses no Army in the modern sense of the word. She possesses an Expeditionary Force, and it would clarify the ideas and reasoning of politicians and journalists throughout the Empire if this fact was constantly borne in mind. It would perhaps assist our people to understand their own limitations if at public banquets the toast of the "Expeditionary Force" could be substituted for the toast of "The Army." The instinct was a valuable one that induced our forefathers to resist the organization of a standing Army. Their reasons, no doubt, were very different from ours. They feared a standing army on account of the use which might be made of it by autocracy or oligarchy to curtail or destroy their liberties. The reason to-day is different, but the instinct is there as of yore. Its basis is an ineradicable belief in the sea, and in sea power, as the only weapon that Great Britain can safely and effectively employ for the purposes of defence.

Why is it that the intentions of the Board of Admiralty in regard to the Mediterranean and the naval conferences between Mr. Churchill and Mr. Borden were so absorbingly interesting? It is because our countrymen throughout the Empire

instinctively realized the moment of peril which it is to be hoped they have escaped. It is that they appreciated the fact that their rulers momentarily halted between two policies—one the traditional policy of depending upon sea power, with its necessary military adjuncts, as the means of securing national and Imperial safety, the other of attempting to lessen our armed strength in reliance upon the diplomatic efforts of Ententes with foreign Powers.

Diplomats very naturally believe in diplomacy, sailors in fleets, and soldiers in armies. It would be a great misfortune if this were to be otherwise. In principle, however, at any rate, the choice has been made; the Fleet is to be rendered so strong that Great Britain may be assured of victory in the main theatre of possible war, and at the same time keep open her communications with her great Eastern dependency, through the medium of the Mediterranean. That is the only interpretation which can be put upon the attitude of the Board of Admiralty. The provision of adequate means to achieve these results must be left to them. The responsibility is theirs. They have practically got their orders from the common sense of the nation.

The feeling is universal that we have escaped a danger, and that we have chosen the better way. If our own people experience a sense of relief, we may rest assured that it is shared by French statesmen and by the French people, who must have looked with alarm upon possibilities which, by reducing our effectiveness at sea during the years

immediately to come, could not fail to weaken the spirit of the Entente between the two countries and its combined strength for defence. No one will recognize the full importance of the national decision more thoroughly than the statesman and soldiers who are so brilliantly and so successfully guiding the destinies of our great rival across the North Sea.

III.

Those great lines of strategy which run along immutable grooves are fixed by geographical conditions. Their modification is not in question. There are, however, subsidiary strategical conclusions where the orbits of strategy and tactics overlap, that always have and always must demand examination from time to time, under the compelling impulse of change in the engines and matériel of war.

The danger of the historical treatment of war by writers even as eminent as Admiral Mahan and Mr. Vincent Corbett is that it generally and almost inevitably ignores the impress of scientific discovery and modern appliances upon the art of destruction. Under the ægis of historical method, aphorisms and maxims, highly important and of unquestionable force at the time they were phrased, are treated with that respect usually reserved for religious dogma. "Numbers only can annihilate," is a good case in point. "Our defence is close to the enemy's ports" is another. A reader of Admiral Mahan might suppose—and his supposition would

receive support from almost every text-book—that Nelson's words were intended for all time, and under all circumstances, to guide the naval strategist, whereas they really were the dicta of a great sea officer brought face to face with the sea problems that confronted Great Britain in the Napoleonic wars between the years 1800 and 1805. Lord Nelson was constantly contending for reinforcements and for concentration of command. It was natural, therefore, that he should lay stress upon numerical superiority as the main factor of successful battle, although no one knew better than he that both on sea and land victory and the destruction of the enemy, disastrous and complete, had over and over again been effected by a force inferior in numbers, but superior in the high command, in fortune, in disposition, or in valour. That "our first defence is close to the enemy's ports" was true enough when these words were used by Nelson. He had in view the invasion of these shores by the French flotillas. He had in view the lie of the French coasts. He had in view the fleets with masts and sails that he commanded with such amazing splendour. Who, however, can say that Nelson's genius would have led him to a precisely similar conclusion had he been confronted with an analogous problem under modern conditions, of ships independent of wind and tide, and of waterways obstructed and defended by the floating mine, by the torpedo and by the submarine. These reflections lead to a conclusion which it is high

time for the naval expert to examine with a mind free from prejudice and from the trammels of preconceived ideas.

Is the next naval war certain to be determined by fleet action between the battleships of the respective nations engaged? Is it certain that the measure of the naval strength of a nation can be taken in capital ships?

Is it sure that the super-Dreadnought is the capital ship of to-day, if by capital ship is meant that type of vessel in which resides the power of settling the question of victory or defeat? Is it certain that in a war between Great Britain and Germany victory will remain with the side that is able to concentrate the largest naval force at the crucial point at the crucial moment? Is it sure that the highest interests, strategical and tactical, of Great Britain require the British Admiral to bring the German Fleet to action at the earliest possible moment?

Is it certain that our "first defence" should in these days be "close to the enemy's ports," if by that is meant that our great battleships are to lie (Germany being assumed to be the enemy) in anchorage protected by fixed defences along the east coast of Scotland ready to pounce upon the German Fleet at the earliest possible moment?

It is possible that all these questions should be answered in the affirmative, but it is both absolutely certain and sure that not one of them has been examined with due care by the minds of men free from historical prejudice.

Perhaps the most important of all these problems arises in the doubt that assails every man who ponders over them, as to whether the value and importance attached to ships of the Dreadnought class are not greatly exaggerated.

It is possible that scientific progress may compel the building of a new fleet of a totally novel type. It may be that in a few years' time* Great Britain will be engaged in building battleships without coal-engines and without funnels, and that we shall be sinking millions of money in the construction of tanks for the storage of oil, which, inasmuch as we do not produce it, will have to be collected and stored in unimaginable quantities. While a great deal of thought is sure to be bestowed upon the question of substituting oil for coal, it is more than doubtful whether any consideration will be given at all to the question whether under the most modern conditions—conditions that include the hydroplane, the submarine, and oil-driven engines—the Dreadnought and super-Dreadnought are the most effective types of sea monsters for destroying the enemy at sea. Upon such a question as this the opinions of men over forty years of age are not worth much. There is, however, here a great opportunity for the young gunners and torpedo lieutenants, and for the young engineer officers of the Navy. It would be interesting to obtain a symposium of youthful minds upon the tactical value of twelve light, swift, unarmoured vessels,

* Written and published in 1912.

with oil-engines, each carrying a 14-inch gun, employed against a super-Dreadnought carrying twelve 14-inch guns. It would be interesting if a tactical exercise on these lines could be carried much further, deep down, for example, into the speculative advantages of concentrated torpedo attack, by shoals of submarines, covered by clouds of hydroplanes, upon a capital ship. It is perfectly conceivable that, manipulated by a commander of genius, vast flotillas of submarine vessels, supported by a new type of destroyer carrying a gun of high calibre, might not only render the shores of Britain absolutely immune from attack, but might also, owing to the wide range of the modern submarine vessel, justify once more Nelson's aphorism that "our first defence is close to the enemy's ports."

Mr. Churchill is young. His intellectual equipment is far above the average. He is by nature a keen fighter, a man who loves the offensive, and of much daring. He is, however, by the exigencies of his position, largely at the mercy of experts. As a rule, experts are the most fatuous people in the world. An expert believes in his own specific. If he did not he would not be an expert. These people are especially mischievous when they are engaged in crushing originality in a soaring mind. It was by the advice of experts that millions of money were spent by Lord Palmerston in fixed defences. It was by the advice of experts that Trincomalee was fortified, and before the fortifications were completed was abandoned. It was by the

advice of experts that the breakwater at Singapore was begun, and again by their advice left unfinished. It is by the advice of experts that millions are being sunk at Rosyth, and before long it will be by the advice of experts that Rosyth is declared to be an unsafe anchorage for the British fleet. By the advice of experts fresh anchorage along the East Coast will be erected, and more millions spent on fixed defences which will in their turn prove to be useless.

On September 7, 1631, a battle was fought at Leipsic by Gustavus, aged thirty-seven, which proved to be the death-day of the old dense formations in land warfare, and, in spite of the traditional expert, determined the triumph of mobility over weight.

Mr. Churchill is now thirty-seven years old. He has a great opportunity.

Between 1912 and 1913 some great sea battles may possibly be fought which will prove once more that, in war; the mobility of genius counts far more than the dense weight of traditions and of expert advice.

IV.

Although the substitution of oil for coal as a propelling power for ships is a question which can properly be submitted to a Royal Commission, that is not the case when we come to enquire into the tactical expediency of fighting a super-Dreadnought with vessels of a type differing from herself.

Such a problem as this can only with propriety be discussed and settled by the Board of Admiralty. In the first place, strategical problems of first-

rate importance are inseparable from the tactical problem, and tactics are an Admiralty matter. Secondly, there is the question of the expenditure that necessarily would be involved, not only by the creation of new types of vessels, but by the consequential changes on sea and on land; and correct calculations could only be made by Admiralty experts.

The secrets of the naval manœuvres of 1912 have been fairly well preserved. No correspondents were allowed with the fleet, and such information as the Press has obtained is of a very partial character. Two broad inferences may surely, however, be drawn from what is known to have occurred during the mimic war between the fleets commanded by Prince Louis of Battenberg and Sir George Callaghan. These inferences convey a striking lesson, and they raise a doubt. The lesson is that an enemy's fleet smaller than our own, conveying an expeditionary force, can pass undetected and with safety through the lines of our cruisers and destroyers, in spite of the most careful patrolling, and in spite of wireless telegraphy; that an enemy's fleet can totally disappear from the eyes of the watchers for at least forty-eight hours, and can land a certain number of hostile troops on British shores. A subsidiary but important lesson is that the submarine, in the hands of a daring enemy, can enter a British port crowded with vessels of war, and effect very serious destruction. That these results were attainable by

an enemy inferior in strength and in numbers very naturally raises doubts as to the completeness of our system of naval defence. It would be interesting to know whether the Admiralty view upon the best defensive tactics against invasion to-day is the same as it was before the manœuvres took place. For example, does the Board of Admiralty consider that, in the event of war, it would be desirable or indeed possible for the British Fleet, or any large proportion of it, to use the new harbour of Rosyth, or indeed any harbour on the north-east coast of these islands? If the enemy's submarines got into what was thought to be a safe anchorage during manœuvres — and it is rumoured that they did so—is it sure that they would not get in during war, and should such a risk be properly taken? If the issue of a naval campaign is to be based upon the victory or destruction of a fleet of large and immensely costly battleships, is it not the height of imprudence to subject them to any risk until the crucial moment of battle arrives? Common sense seems to indicate that they should not be located in any position in which they are open to attack by smaller vessels of war. At the root of the whole matter, however, lies the question whether the naval supremacy of any country can be left to the arbitrament of battle between monster ships. War is not a tournament, and yet the whole idea underlying the question of sea command is that naval supremacy is to be the guerdon of super-Dreadnoughts tilting at each

other. There is probably not a man outside the Admiralty, and possibly not a man within it, who has formed clear ideas upon what type of vessel could be built, at the lowest cost, able to carry into action a 14-inch gun. Is it, for instance, possible to construct any sort of unarmoured vessel, of the Destroyer type, that is capable of carrying a 14-inch gun and attaining a speed of thirty-five knots, and, if so, what would be her cost complete and ready for sea?

Furthermore, assuming that such a vessel could be built, fitted with oil engines, would her radius of action be sufficient to make her of service anywhere but within the confines of the Channel and the North Sea? Pushing this line of argument to its extreme conclusion, surely it is worth while to consider whether, for the purposes of our Empire —for the purposes of protecting these islands on the one hand, and of protecting our lines of commerce on the other—two distinct groups of war-vessels are not required, and whether it is necessary to include the Dreadnought or the super-Dreadnought in either. Is it not worth while to consider whether the defence of these Islands could not with safety be left to large flotillas of submarines, and of some new type of destroyer, provided with great speed, carrying a gun of heavy calibre, and not very costly to build? And is it not worth while to consider further whether the defence of our seaborne commerce could not be left to squadrons of battle cruisers of great speed,

of powerful armament, and with a coal or oil-carrying capacity that would enable them to cover large areas of the ocean?

Let us put the case in the following form: Suppose that Great Britain possessed to-day three or four squadrons of battle cruisers of the *Indomitable* type, and supposing that, in addition to these ships, she possessed the equivalent of the cost of the whole of her existing battleships in submarines and destroyers, even of the present types, is there anyone who can assert and prove to the satisfaction of unprejudiced men that she would be less formidable at sea, and less powerful relatively to other Powers, than she is to-day?

These reflections are the outcome of some thought given to the supposed occurrences during recent manœuvres. They are not put forward didactically; they are merely suggestions. The problem broadly stated is this: Is it certain that the enquiry set on foot by Mr. Churchill, and entrusted to Lord Fisher, as to the advisability of substituting oil for coal, is the only naval enquiry of first-rate importance to the country that should be taken in hand at the present time? Ought not this enquiry to be supplemented by another—first, as to whether, strategically and tactically, our fleets to-day are composed of the ships best suited to our Imperial requirements; and, second, whether modern conditions of fighting at sea, influenced as they are bound to be by recent scientific development, do not demand the substitution of new types of war-

vessels for the conventional types with which we are familiar?

The gravity of these questions can hardly be exaggerated. They are interwoven with our national security, with our Imperial position, and with the individual freedom of every British citizen. Whatever may be the outcome of the abstract discussions which are now occupying the attention of thoughtful students of political problems, here and abroad, as to the possibility of putting an end to internecine conflict between great European States, dependent as they are upon each other for the necessities of life, it cannot be doubted that under present circumstances men of different nationalities in Europe might at any moment take to cutting each other's throats without much more provocation than some absurd point of honour or etiquette in Morocco or elsewhere. For such an emergency affecting ourselves we are bound to be prepared.

We cannot afford to run any serious risks. The prosperity and happiness of our people depend upon our being able to assert our political independence as a nation and our financial independence as a commercial people. These are the conditions of our Imperial freedom and of our individual well-being.

Owing to the insular position of Great Britain and Ireland, we have been able hitherto to dispense with an Army on modern lines. The British people are not a Nation in Arms. They have shrunk from bearing the burden of military pre-

paration and efficiency which is forced upon Continental Powers by the existence of their land frontiers. The British people are, however, compelled to bear a heavy financial strain occasioned by the necessity for maintaining their supremacy at sea. They escape the personal burden that is imposed by the necessities of militarism. They have got to bear, however, the financial burden of navalism. These barbarous expressions are not abstract propositions, but concrete facts. It is maddening that in the high phase of civilization which we, in common with all European nations, have attained in the twentieth century, the British people should have this dilemma forced upon them. Some of the best brains, some of the most acute minds, some of the most energetic administrators at home and in the Dominions are for ever concentrating upon problems, the solution of which, whether in peace or war, spells waste and destruction. Nothing could be more disheartening, and nothing could be more certain, than the utter futility of attempting under the present conditions of the world to escape the task. From week to week, from month to month, from year to year, we have got to keep the questions of national defence, of commercial security, of Imperial co-operation steadily in mind and conspicuously before the eyes of the elector. The aspects of the naval and military situation are constantly changing, and have constantly to be reconsidered. We have attempted before touching upon the military situa-

tion to attempt to describe the naval situation as it stands to-day.

To sum up what has been said in this and previous papers on the subject, it is essential to remember that as Great Britain possesses no Army, but only a small Expeditionary Force, for the purpose of the police work of the Empire, and inasmuch as our people are not organized or trained in sufficient numbers to enable our country to be defended with any hope of success if sea command were wrested from us, we are forced by circumstances, over which no statesman, however able or however powerful, can exercise control, to depend upon our fleets and upon naval warfare.

The governing condition of our defensive policy is that the fight for freedom, if it comes at all, must inevitably take place at sea.

It follows from this (1) that the British Empire floats on the British Navy; (2) that the British Fleet has got to be of sufficient power to be overwhelmingly superior at the crucial point and at the crucial moment; (3) that it has got to be of sufficient size to enable some portion of it to be distributed over minor theatres of political conflict and of commercial competition; (4) that it is worth while to consider whether undue importance has not hitherto been attached to the arbitrament of the battle between Dreadnoughts and super-Dreadnoughts; (5) that it should be considered whether the development of science does not render it possible, and not improbable, that naval superiority

in home waters might be achieved by small unarmoured ships of great speed, carrying guns of heavy calibre, when combined with the action of submarine vessels; (6) that some decision should be arrived at whether the defence of these Islands in any case could not with great advantage be committed to flotillas of submarines and destroyers, leaving to the Battle Fleet greater freedom of manœuvre; (7) that such inquiry should be at once undertaken with a view to ascertaining whether, if monster ships are to be maintained as part of our equipment for naval war, they should under any circumstances, in peace or in war, be located in harbours on the East Coast; (8) finally, that the enquiry should be extended to the question whether the commercial freedom of our people all over the Empire could not best be secured by battle cruisers of a novel type, acting in consort with vessels of the same type locally provided by the Dominions.

V.

Thus, no statesman of wide outlook can afford to neglect the rapid growth of Canada and of the other great Dominions, and their inevitable influence upon the future of British policy, if the Empire is to hold together. Still less can he afford to overlook the recent changes taking place in what has been hitherto called the unchanging East.

In spite of the enormous wealth aggregated within these Islands, and a population of over forty

millions of people, in spite of the steadfastness of British character, and the still warlike temperament of the race, insular power is not so predominant as it was a century ago, and the centre of our Imperial gravity is not so stable.

The growth of other navies, and the conquest of the air, are new factors which cannot be neglected when we take stock of our relative armed strength and our powers of offence and defence. Hence the natural and laudable anxiety of those who, like Lord Roberts, spend arduous days in trying to awaken their countrymen to a sense of danger. In politics, in commerce, and in war, there are no eternal truths but one, and that is that every shibboleth is a danger-point. In the sphere of national competition, the methods of the eighteenth cannot be safely applied to the exigencies of the twentieth century. No great nation has yet proved quietist in thought or action. So far, growth has synchronized always with the use of armed force. It would be hazardous to assume that the world, or even Europe, has yet arrived at a stage when any nation can look to its neighbours, to alliances and Ententes, for safety, rather than to itself.

A people, however, can circumscribe their sphere of activities and limit their ambitions. The moment seems to have come when the British people should wake to the full measure of their responsibilities, gauge their capacity for interference in the affairs of the world, and endeavour to

place their armed strength, naval and military, in some sort of relation to the policy they intend to pursue.

All naval and military preparation for war must depend upon a clear appreciation of the purposes for which the forces of a nation are intended to be used.

The nations of the earth are roughly grouped into what are called Powers of the first and second class. There is no accepted definition of a first-class Power, but it is generally conceded that the designation applies to those nations that intend to have something to say to the affairs of their neighbours as well as to their own. Great Britain is, without question, one of these Powers. No people on earth have so far shown themselves less inclined to forgo the privilege of taking a hand in every game of policy wherever and whenever played. Yet no people realizes less its own limitations at the present time.

The first question, therefore, that the British people have got to answer is whether they desire their Navy or their Army, or both, to be used by their Foreign Minister for the purpose of giving effect to their policy, should the necessity arise.

If the answer is in the affirmative, it follows that our fleets and our land forces should be equal to the task imposed upon them. It is with these ideas in his mind, and deeply impressed with the warlike impulses of his countrymen, that Lord

Roberts, with miraculous freshness and vigour, never ceases to urge them to change the system under which, so far, the armed forces of the nation have been raised and organized. Given the premise from which he starts, who can deny the wisdom and patriotism of his advice?

If, on the other hand, the British people desire to limit their range of diplomatic activity, if they will be content to forgo diplomatic initiative, eschew isolated action, and resolve to support rather than take a lead, and if they force their statesmen to make clear the point that Great Britain is a sea Power, and in no sense a land Power, the problem becomes a totally different one. We shall then have to fall back upon the power of our fleets and their adjuncts. The necessity to us of predominant sea power has never been questioned. Our insular position and our scattered Empire, together with the teaching of experience, demand that the superiority of Great Britain upon the ocean should be placed beyond all doubt. This admitted and achieved, the precise method of maintaining inviolate our sea command, wherever threatened, together with the desirability of keeping our shores free from attack, is one demanding continual reconsideration as the circumstances of European politics, of commercial rivalry, and of scientific discovery alter.

To summarize:

1. If policy governs armaments, and if our policy is to take a part on equal terms with the greatest

naval and military Powers in the affairs of Europe, we should recast our military system, because, although naval power will enable us to exercise great influence in the affairs of Europe, it will not, except in alliance with other military Powers, make us the predominant partners, or place Great Britain on an equality with Germany or France.

2. If our policy is confined to safeguarding the Empire and our Imperial interests in India and elsewhere, and if we may confidently rely upon the support of the Dominions, our present naval and military systems may be adequate to our needs, but Great Britain will cease to be a first-class Power in the ordinary acceptance of the term.

3. Owing, however, to the changes introduced by science in recent years, the strategic and tactical plans of our naval and military staffs require reconsideration. The offensive-defensive, so effective in land campaigns, is not necessarily suited to our naval requirements, and it becomes a question whether a thoroughly organized system of submersible flotillas, coupled with aerial watching, might not free the battle-fleets of the Empire from concerning themselves with coastal defence.

4. Similarly, the tactical maxims of Continental war between nations with land frontiers are not necessarily applicable to an insular people, so that irregular and half-trained forces operating within their own territory upon an enemy cut off from its base may well produce results altogether at variance with experience acquired under totally different

circumstances and under wholly divergent conditions.

5. Whether, however, the British people elect to have an Army based upon the system now applied within these Islands, or upon the system common to the Continent of Europe, sea command is for us a necessity of national existence and not merely an instrument of national ambition. It is hardly worth while to labour this point, although it possesses a direct and obvious bearing upon the military situation.

6. And, finally, no situation can be more dangerous for our country than that we should halt between two policies, and thus possibly fail to adapt our naval and military forces to the policy we intend to pursue.

VI.

The naval situation in its broadest sense can never be adequately discussed unless due regard is had to the fact that command of the sea means more to Great Britain than the security of these Islands from attack. However important, however vital, may appear to any Englishman resident in Great Britain the possible invasion of our shores by an enemy, the perspective is entirely different when the question of naval superiority is looked at from other points within the Empire. To the Canadian or to the Australian the phrase "British Sea Command" means something quite different from the interpretation it bears in the eyes of a resident in Fleet Street. To the sailor patrolling the Mediter-

ranean Sea, or to the merchant of Shanghai, the phrase again has a different meaning. These considerations affect the statesman, and he is bound to take the broadest and most comprehensive view of the meaning and cost of sea power. If, then, sea command is an Imperial and not a purely national concern, the attitude of Canada towards Great Britain in relation to naval matters is of deep interest and of supreme importance.

Canada, outside the British Islands, is the pivot of the British Empire. Canada is potentially the largest, the wealthiest, and the most thickly peopled of that portion of the earth's surface which in the future appears likely to be the heritage of the Anglo-Saxon. Within a measurable space of time Canada will contain a population in excess of Great Britain, and when finally the centre of the world's gravity has shifted from Europe Westward, Canada, with her vast resources, and her central position midway between Europe and the Far East, is bound to be a most serious competitor against the United States for the financial and commercial supremacy of mankind. There appears to be no obstacle to this realization of the Canadian dream, unless it should happen that the Western races fail to maintain their moral and intellectual superiority over the races of the East.

Mr. Borden has said—and he voices undoubtedly the ideas and aspirations of the Canadian people—that Canada cannot remain a mere adjunct of Great Britain. It may be early yet for this notion

to take root in the minds of business men in the city of London naturally conscious of the important rôle played by Great Britain in the business sphere of the world. Still less is it likely to penetrate at present into the bureaucratic recesses of the Colonial Office. Until quite lately even the Admiralty did not possess a glimmering perception of its force. When last the Imperial Conference met at Westminster, the attitude of the Admiralty towards the idea of naval co-operation between the Dominions and the Mother Country was said by one of the most prominent of the Dominion representatives to be patronizing and arrogant. It was patronizing because our sailors could not be got to understand that any solid advantage could possibly accrue to the navy from the independent effort of any one of the Dominions. Their demeanour was this: "By all means do what you can to provide ships and sailors. They may come in useful, and at any rate will do the British Navy no harm." Therefore they somewhat arrogantly declared that the only substantial assistance which could be rendered by the Dominions to the British Navy was by paying for British-built Dreadnoughts, manned and commanded by professional seamen trained in this country. It was impossible at that time to get the Board of Admiralty to grasp the point of view of Canadian statesmen who did not see their way to adopting a co-operative policy.

Yet Sir Wilfrid Laurier had made his position perfectly clear. Personally, he was not favourable

to Canada making any contribution at all to the naval resources of the Empire. He conceded, however, this much—that any contribution given by Canada in the form of warships must remain under Canadian control, stationed in Canadian waters in peace, and only placed at the service of the British Admiralty in time of war by the specific act of the Canadian Government. The reply of the British Admiralty, to which, however, public utterance was not given, was "thank you for nothing."*

It has been assumed that Mr. Borden was prepared to go farther than his predecessor. Time will show. No one who listened to Mr. Borden can have much doubt as to what his recommendation to the Dominion is likely to be. He has clearly in mind the vitalizing principle, so far as Canada is concerned, that a Dominion can give nothing in the way of ships and men towards the common defence of the Empire unless she is conceded a voice in the direction of Imperial policy and affairs. If this condition were granted, Mr. Borden's mind is obviously open to the consideration of any proposal as to how Canada could best co-operate for the purposes of Imperial Defence.

The naval situation, therefore, as regards the Empire, hinges at this moment—first, upon the discovery of some practical method of giving Canada a share in the direction of our Imperial concerns; and, secondly, upon a right solution of

* This section was printed in the *Westminster Gazette*, on September 11, 1912.

the strategical problems involved in the whole question of the naval defence of these islands, of the territorial integrity of the Dominions, and of the commercial interests of the Empire.

The first and major problem is one of high statesmanship, involving manifold and complex considerations with which it is not proposed to deal at this moment. The strategical question of Imperial defence, however, is urgent, because of the ever-recurrent risk that large sums of money will be thrown away upon useless fixed defences, or upon a type of ship that is very shortly found to be obsolete or superfluous. The British Admiralty have always, since this question was first mooted, aimed at a Federal Imperial Fleet. Their reasons are sound enough. Higher efficiency can no doubt be obtained if sea officers and crews are trained under one system and under one supreme command. A Federal Fleet renders possible interchangeability between officers and men, and also solves difficulties of seniority and promotion. An isolated Dreadnought or two, trained as a distinct unit in Canadian or Australian waters, and commanded by elderly and inexperienced officers, could never attain that high standard of efficiency required to satisfy a British Admiral. If battleships are to be provided by the Dominions, they should undoubtedly be handed over as part and parcel of the British Fleet in peace, if they are to be worth in war the money that they cost. The attitude taken up by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Mr. Borden

renders such an eventuality highly improbable for many years to come. If, then, the contention is correct that battleships, in order to be efficient and worth building, must be manned and trained as part of the British Fleet in peace, and if this object is unattainable owing to the attitude of the Dominions, what is to be gained by luring the Dominions to build this type of ship? It is surely most unreasonable for the Admiralty to adopt the line of "Dreadnought or nothing."

It has been the aim of the writer to show that the functions of naval defence are twofold, and that it is not sound naval strategy to concentrate the whole naval effort of a maritime Power upon defeating the battle-fleet of the enemy at sea; that there are two cognate functions which an Imperial Navy will have to perform: one to safeguard harbours and coast-line from direct attack by means of submarine flotillas; and, secondly, to defend our own commerce, and harass that of the enemy by means of a novel type of warship. It would, then, seem that the effort of the Dominions should be to fulfil, each of its own initiative and by means of its own vessels, these latter functions. Canada could well concentrate her naval energies upon the construction of submarines and upon providing a typical ship that would fulfil the double purpose of providing defence for her water-ways and a guard for the great liners running between the St. Lawrence and European ports. A similiar objective may be kept in view by the other Domin-

ions. Even if the sea officers and crews for these vessels were below the standard of the British Navy, they could, without doubt, be made efficient enough for the purposes required. The political difficulty, now a harassing and obstructive factor, would not arise because these vessels could be kept in time of peace in Dominion waters and under the undisputed authority of the Dominion Governments. When, hereafter, the way has been found to render the cohesion of the British Empire more real than it is now; when some machinery has been agreed upon that will enable Dominion statesmen to have a share in shaping the foreign policy of the Empire, and when a great Imperial War Staff has been established that will control the training of an Imperial fleet in peace and direct its activities in war, then will be the time for the Dominions to consider the provision of large capital ships, if vessels of that type are then considered necessary instruments of naval warfare.

VII.

The military situation of Great Britain is, and always must be, the outcome of her foreign policy. The strategic position of a great Continental Power creates a military situation that is independent of the policy of the moment. For Germany, the presence of France on one frontier and Russia on the other creates a crisis that is constant and unchanging. Great Britain, on the other hand, is so geographically placed that, were

it not for her Imperial commitments oversea, an army in the ordinary sense of the term would not be required at all. In order, therefore, to estimate what kind of military force this country requires, its size, its composition, and its organization, the foreign policy—that is to say, the position which the British people desire to take up in relation to the affairs of other nations—must be weighed and determined.

The term "Imperial Defence," as applied to the British Empire, is, if the facts were recognized, a misnomer. "Imperial Offence" would be nearer the mark. Up to the present, the history of our country shows that the people of Great Britain, at home and oversea, are not a peaceful race, and, so far as naval and military matters are concerned, have not contemplated solely operations of defence. The British people are warlike and aggressive, They have for centuries been constantly fighting, and, indeed, until quite recently, it has been difficult to find any single year in which the British Empire has not been at war in some part of the world. When the great struggle with Napoleon was over, and when the wars against France, which had been in progress almost without interruption for 500 years, had come to an end, there arose in the first half of the nineteenth century a party of men with commercial interests, who were strong enough and articulate enough to convert considerable numbers of their fellow-countrymen to the view that Great Britain would in future best be

served by cultivating the arts of peace. Their advocacy of this new departure found expression in the great Exhibition of 1851. It was the first of its kind, but, in spite of prophetic acclamation to the contrary, it did not herald a pacific era over the British Empire. Britons all over the world went on fighting as before, and the Empire went on expanding, while the British Minister, Lord Palmerston, went on interfering in the affairs of neighbouring States with greater pertinacity than any of his predecessors. Then and onwards we continued to grab every available piece of uncivilized territory that was not already in the hands of Europeans, whenever it was thought that commercial or political advantages might accrue to the possessors. The undeveloped resources of every continent were, in the view of the ordinary Briton, his heritage. If he could not make use of them at the moment, it was sufficient for any foreign Power to cast an eye upon them for the British Government to interfere, and to place obstacles in the way of anyone not a Briton who desired to possess himself of them. The British leopard has not changed his spots.

It is true that since 1854—that is to say, since the war in the Crimea—Great Britain has not been engaged in hostilities with any European Power. There is an obvious reason for this. During the last sixty years the conflicts in Europe have not been dynastic or political; they have been racial. Not revolution, but evolution, has been the key-

note of the Continental struggles which have led to the regrouping, within the boundaries of Europe, of men speaking the same language and inheriting the same racial characteristics. In this process Great Britain has had very little concern; hence her aloofness. During late years another cause has undoubtedly contributed towards the maintenance of peace between her and her European neighbours. The States contiguous to her in Europe have in the last fifty years entirely recast their military systems. They are no longer composed of peaceful citizens relying for their security upon mercenary armies enlisted from among their own people or from foreign adventurers. These States are themselves what are called "Nations in Arms." Their manhood is trained to arms, and every individual of capable age is under penalty to risk his life in battle for the State of which he is a member. The armies thus raised and trained are of great size and potency, so that Great Britain, which alone of all European States remains still constant to the military organization of the eighteenth century, is physically unable to compete with them in land warfare on European soil. Since 1870, when the facts were recognized, and when the results of the Franco-German War opened the eyes of statesmen, British Governments have realized that this country is unable single-handed to fight, on the Continent of Europe, any great Power with a reasonable chance of victory. The British people themselves, however, have never understood the full import of

the change in the relative strength of Great Britain and her Continental neighbours, and the average Briton still thinks of himself as the military arbiter of Europe. It is true that there exists in the country a strong party clamorous for peace almost at any price, but the keenest propagandists of peace are constantly desirous of interfering by force of arms in the free use of their activities by a foreign people when some moral divergence of view has arisen between them. It is unnecessary to analyze the inconsistency. It is sufficient to state it, in order that the point may be made clear, that under modern conditions, governing the relative armed forces of European nations, the British people either should stand aside from the quarrels of their neighbours, and deny themselves the satisfaction of interference in their concerns, or they should submit to the sacrifices which other nations make when their manhood is trained and forced to carry arms.

The Empire has reached a stage of development when those responsible for its destinies are morally bound to explain to the people the plain unvarnished truth, and to point out the choice which in the interests of individual freedom has to be made between contending schools of thought and between conflicting material interests.

A static policy of defence, a determination to keep what we possess, but to shoulder no new responsibilities, to keep clean our own hands, but not to force others to wash theirs, to maintain our

own freedom, but leave to others the guardianship of their liberties, is a policy thought by some to be ignoble but by others the quintessence of prudence and common sense. Such a policy requires armaments on sea and land of a specific kind, and demands certain sacrifices, far from light, which so far the people of these Islands have shown themselves willing to bear.

The contrary policy is of dynamic kind, and its consequences are far-reaching, and difficult to forecast. This much, however, is certain, that Great Britain will be imprudent beyond measure, and liable to inconceivable disaster, if she continues to pursue a policy of world-wide activity, of philanthropic self-indulgence, and of commercial arrogance, unless she is at the same time prepared to recast her military system, and to submit to the sacrifice, financial and personal, which such a change involves.

During the past six years, and more than ever to-day, under a Liberal Government, whose creed and protestations are on the side of limited commitments in foreign affairs, Great Britain has taken a hand in the European game of politics. Deliberately the practice of "splendid isolation" has been abandoned, and whether the form has been an Alliance or an Entente, a documentary bond or an honourable understanding, Great Britain may easily find herself obliged to take up arms in quarrels which may not be her own.

These indisputable facts and this manifestation

of an active policy (whether justifiable or dangerous, is not here in question) undoubtedly create a difficult military situation. For the first time since the final overthrow of Napoleon in 1815, Great Britain appears to stand committed to military adventure oversea under circumstances not of her own choosing, and in a cause that may have no immediate or direct bearing upon purely British interests. For the moment she has ceased to be a free agent, and has parted with the guardianship of her own soul. Her honour is pledged to France and Russia, although there may be no written parchment or attested treaty.

Foreign policy, whether wise or imprudent, whether sound or faulty, dictates the military situation of the Empire, and it is from the point of view of our written and unwritten obligations to others, and not from the point of view of a State retaining complete freedom of action, that the military situation should be examined.

VIII.

If the policy of Great Britain leads to direct interference by armed force in the affairs of the European Continent, whether in order to maintain the balance of power or for any philanthropic or commercial end, then it is difficult to resist the contention that the British Army, in order to be effective, should be based upon the system, and trained according to the methods of the great Continental Powers.

If Great Britain is to send an army to fight in

the cock-pit of Europe, the ideas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries should forthwith be abandoned, and a compulsory substituted for a voluntary military system. How is it possible for any sane mind to resist this conclusion?

If, on the other hand, the policy of this country is to eschew Continental entanglements, to limit our military requirements to the defence of these shores against raids, and to maintain an adequate army for reinforcement at any danger point along the frontier of the Empire, the problem to be solved is wholly different.

In point of fact, our national policy halts between the two, and hence flow the difficulties confronting military administrators and military reformers.

That position of splendid isolation dear to the Palmerstonian generation was abandoned by Lord Lansdowne, and is repudiated by Sir Edward Grey. We are in alliance with Japan in the Far East, and our honour is pledged to France and Russia in Europe and Asia.

That this country reaps advantages in the China Seas and on the far frontier of India from our alliances and Ententes, cannot be denied. The security and prosperity of India are worth a price, and that price is paid in the North Sea, and in the turmoil caused by the advocates of compulsory service at home.

Frankness and fair dealing towards our friends abroad and our people at home require plain speaking from our statesmen. Many controversies

would be set at rest, and much future misunderstanding averted, if our limitations were admitted, and if our position as a strictly naval Power were to be more clearly defined.

It might be very bad diplomacy, but it would be high and honest statesmanship, if the Prime Minister of this country were to explain in terms admitting of no doubt that our expeditionary force is a reinforcement, an armed reserve, maintained for the purpose of relieving and strengthening our forces scattered along the frontiers of the Empire, and that it is not organized or equipped for service on European battlefields.

Some politicians and publicists contend that the grouping of the great Powers places upon Great Britain the burden of supporting France and Russia with a field army. No responsible British statesman has, however, up to the present time, made the admission, and no French statesman has publicly asserted that any engagement or understanding exists between the two countries whereby we are pledged to send an expeditionary force to the Continent of Europe. The danger lies not in an understanding, but in misconception. Why should not the point be made clear? Why should not British statesmanship make plain to the people of these islands and to their friends abroad that Great Britain fights at sea and not on shore; that her fleets, and not her armies, are her contribution to any combined effort, and that, in short, she is a sea power, and not a land power.

Why not base the policy of Great Britain upon fact, instead of upon aspiration? Such a policy would spell alliance instead of Entente, and would necessarily be followed by a naval and military convention.

If the Empire's interests are imperilled by lack of adequate military preparation for war, the reason is that the end in view is not clear to those whose function it is to adapt the means to the end.

To German statesmen, to the German staff, naval or military, their strategical position is plain as daylight. There is no difference of opinion as to where their danger lies, or how it is to be provided against. Here, at home, in spite of the Committee of Imperial Defence, in spite of the General Staff organized since 1905, and of the Naval War Staff recently created, there is no real and sound co-ordination of ideas between politicians, sailors, and soldiers upon the dangers with which the Empire may be faced, and the means to be employed to meet them. The politician will not commit himself. The sailor ignores the soldier, and the soldier thinks of battleships in terms of transports. The sailor's horizon is bounded by the estuary of the Elbe. The soldier's dream is the line of the Meuse. The sailor thinks of the army as a stepmother thinks of a tiresome and fretful charge. The regular soldier thinks of the Territorial Force as an athlete thinks of a lame brother. "Let me alone and all will be well," is the battle-signal of the Admiralty, and is the device of the Imperial General Staff.

The British nation, however, is essentially the most democratic in the world, and the least inclined, historically and practically, to allow itself to be led by professional sailors and soldiers. It is the politician that always has governed and always will govern the nation's armaments. Hence the vital importance of obtaining a clear and definite view of the objects of our governing statesmen, before it is possible to estimate the military forces that are an Imperial necessity.

Putting aside temporary entanglements into which we may have been drawn by political carelessness, or by professional keenness, the main objectives of our military policy have hitherto been defined to be:

1. The reinforcement of British garrisons at danger-points along the frontier of the Empire.

2. The maintenance inviolate and uninvaded of the shores of Britain.

The Regular Army, composed of six Infantry Divisions and one Cavalry Division, with Reserves, is the force which soldiers and statesmen have considered sufficient to fulfil the requirements of this reinforcement. No responsible politician, no responsible soldier, has come forward, so far, to tell the people of this country that this force is inadequate, although its readiness for war has been criticized and questioned. The justification for the smallness of such a force undoubtely lies in its supreme readiness, in its perfect training, and absolute mobility.

If these conditions are wanting, the capacity of

the Army Council is a sham, and the nation would have a right to think itself betrayed.

The individual responsibility of members of the Army Council is perfectly clear. They cannot be called to account for the policy of the country, for the insistence upon voluntary forms of enlistment, or for the total numbers or composition of the Forces of the Crown. The responsibility for these things lies upon Ministers and upon Parliament.

For the efficiency of the Army, within these limitations, for its training and equipment, and for its mobility, every individual member of the Army Council may, however, properly be held responsible, and any soldier who, by remaining at his post, covers the deficiency of the Regular Army in supreme readiness for war is a traitor to his country. May it not, therefore, be assumed that the soldiers at present constituting the Army Council are satisfied that, subject to the limitations imposed by Parliament, the Regular Army is the most perfect machine of the size in the world.

If policy, therefore, governs armaments, and if the policy of the British people is to support their friends abroad by sea power, and not by land forces, but to keep within these Islands a land force, adequate in point of numbers, and perfect in every detail of training and equipment, instantly ready for war, the Regular Army must be assumed to be sufficient for the purpose.

The requisite strength to maintain inviolate these shores from attack raises other questions.

IX.

The Regular Army cannot rightly be counted among the forces earmarked for the defence of these shores. The Special Reserve must be placed in the same category as the Regular Army, of which, since the Act enabling the men of the Special Reserve to be sent abroad in war, it forms part.

At the present time, therefore, the defence of these Islands rests, broadly speaking, upon 250,000 Territorial troops. This is the total amount of our land forces which can be considered available for this purpose. The contrary has often been stated. Ministers and military authorities have declared over and over again that, in addition to the Territorial Force, Great Britain possesses for purposes of home defence a certain number of Regular troops, and a certain number of men of the Militia class, now called the Special Reserve. These statements are illusory, and although they are not made with that intention, are wholly deceptive, as will be seen the moment that we come to consider the circumstances of a war within the Empire, such as that which occurred in South Africa, and which might recur any day either in India or on the frontiers of any portion of the Empire oversea. In such circumstances it is beyond question that these Islands would, within a very short period, be denuded of all Regular troops, and of the whole of the Special Reserve. No one who has profited by

the lessons of modern war can be in doubt upon the point. The Regular Army maintained at home is very small. Every available regular soldier now abroad is earmarked for duty oversea, and is practically immobile at the point where he stands sentry along the extended frontiers of the Empire. This figure exemplifies the meaning of soldiers when they state, with perfect accuracy, that six divisions of infantry and a cavalry division is the maximum mobile fighting force that Great Britain can put into the field. With regard to this force two things must be said: first, that in order to raise it to war strength and to keep it at war strength for the first few months of a war, every man of which it is composed on a peace establishment, together with the whole of the Ordinary Reserve and the Special Reserve, will, without doubt, be required. Any statement to the contrary is misleading. It should be an axiom for statesmen that any serious war in which Great Britain becomes involved, and which necessitates the reinforcement of her troops abroad, is bound to denude Great Britain of the Regular Army. It is well known, for recent experience shows it, that the ravages of modern war are of such magnitude, and the strategy of modern war is so swift in operation, that losses, if they are to be reparable, require drafts of men and officers in proportion of three men to every one placed in the line of battle.

Drafts, therefore, must be instantly ready to take the field, fully armed, equipped, and trained,

at the outbreak of hostilities, and any calculation based upon the hypothesis that a Reserve can be used both for drafts and for separate action as fighting units is erroneous and deceptive. If an adequate Reserve for purposes of drafts is not available no modern army can hope to survive the first shock of modern war.

The dry facts of the military situation as regards our insular defence, if they are truthfully examined, lead to the conclusion that, should the maritime guard of our shores be pierced by an invading or a raiding force, at a time when Great Britain is engaged in fighting for Imperial interests abroad, we possess for the purposes of purely home defence about 250,000 Territorial troops, and such accessories in the shape of Irregular Forces as might be organized or utilized *ad hoc*.

It is essential, if the problem is to be fairly considered, to put on one side the Regular Army and its Reserves, and then to see whether the Territorial Force is the best that can be designed under existing circumstances for the defence of these Islands, and whether, in connection with the Navy, it is sufficient in numbers, adequately trained, and scientifically organized for the purpose.

The difficulty about the Territorial soldier is that in his heart of hearts he desires to emulate in appearance and smartness of movement the Regular trained soldier, and is unwilling to bear the obvious mark of the irregular levy and to be used as such. Yet he approximates under our present system of

training more nearly to the Irregular than to the Regular soldier. The Regular Army is the outcome of discipline and technical skill, resulting from continual practice. It is a trade like any other. Upon the Territorial soldier and officer, in spite of uniform and nomenclature, is branded the unmistakable mark of the amateur. Every competent and sincere soldier would say that if Territorial troops are to be utilized to the fullest advantage they should be handled in war very much as General Botha handled his Boers, and their organization should be based on the assumption that they are to be so handled. If this doctrine, however, were to be pressed, we should inevitably be faced with an insuperable difficulty in raising any Territorial Force at all, because men and officers, like the old Volunteers, desire to be treated more or less like Regular troops. Young men engaged in business, in shops and in clerical work, who enlist in the Territorial Force, desire to be thought real soldiers. They have always wished and still wish to be organized in battalions, in brigades, and in divisions, because that is the organization and mark of the Regular Army. The business man who takes up in his leisure hours Territorial work takes himself very seriously. He aspires to pass military examinations, and to become proficient at war-games, and to dream that he is competent to effect in war combinations of troops of all arms. He desires to comprehend the principles of strategy, and he likes to think of himself

as a critic of military tactics. The pathos of the situation is that these men are the salt of the Territorial Army, the very best men it contains, and the foundation upon which the whole superstructure rests. If you take the heart out of these men, if you lead them to think that the idea of the Territorial Force fighting European soldiers in line of battle, attempting to cope with European troops in the technical formations in which trained men can be handled, is an idea at variance with the possibilities of real war, the Territorial Force is bound very speedily to crumble away. In order to recruit this force, men and officers must be allowed to keep their illusions. Herein lies an element of tragedy, because no competent soldier of the front rank for a moment contemplates without serious alarm, the prospect of commanding a Territorial army in pitched battle against Continental troops.

For the purpose of recruiting and maintaining the Territorial Force a military organization is a necessity. For the purpose of pitting Territorial troops against an enemy composed of Regulars, military formations are a snare. This was Lord Haldane's dilemma. He desired to have at the back of the Regular Army a military force. He had clear evidence before him that the old Volunteers were slowly melting away, owing to their inadequate recognition as a military force. He desired to enlist under a voluntary system all available young men for the defence of these Islands who were not prepared to enter the Regular Forces

of the Crown. He formed the Territorial Associations and he gave military organization to the Territorial Force. His methods were the best that could have been adopted under the circumstances. From the point of view of Lord Haldane, the Army Act, for which he is responsible, was excellently drawn up, and has proved highly successful. From the point of view of many who hoped hereafter to substitute compulsory for voluntary service, Lord Haldane's organization had much to commend it. It must, however, be admitted that doubts and misgivings have always haunted the minds of soldiers, proficient in the art of war, highly tested by practical experience in the field of battle, who realized that the Territorial Force, composed as it is, and trained as it is, cannot be made to respond to the demands of a commander in the field who was expected to use it according to the conventional methods of modern warfare, against a European foe landed upon these shores.

The views of these men may be summed up as follows: Trained European troops can be fought with chances of success by troops as highly trained as themselves. This is a truism of war. They can be hampered with chances of success by guerilla troops defending their own territory under the eyes of a friendly population, and in localities with every detail of which they are familiar. History is full of examples of struggles of this kind long before the days of Boer exploits in South Africa. A trained army, however, cannot be fought with

any chance of success by an untrained army organized upon similar lines, and manœuvred according to the theories of Clausewitz or Von der Goltz. This proposition can be proved by the whole course of military history. What, then, is the inference to be drawn from these propositions by a statesman responsible for the defence of Great Britain and for the expenditure involved in maintaining the Territorial Force?

He is bound to ask himself whether, in the first instance, there is any probability of an enemy effecting a landing upon the British Isles, and, in the second place, whether, if such a probability exists, the defending force should not be organized and trained in the manner best calculated to cope with an invasion or with a raid, whichever designation is thought to be appropriate to the landing of an armed enemy upon these shores. Conscriptionists would, of course, say that the obvious course is to substitute for the Territorial Force a Nation in Arms, to give every man a thorough training for the minimum period considered necessary by the military authorities. We should then possess a force fit to cope with an invading enemy, and an additional advantage of this method would be that Great Britain would have acquired the power, which she at present lacks, of expanding her Regular Army in any conflict into which she might be drawn on the Continent of Europe or in any sphere of military operations oversea.

It cannot be denied that there are two great

difficulties in the way of adopting such a policy as this, apparently for the present quite insuperable. The first is that the British people have given no indication of willingness to undertake the burden of conscription or to face the responsibilities that every Continental nation is forced to bear, but from which they, thanks to their insular position, have hitherto been exempt. The second is that no protagonist of conscription in this country has yet discovered a practical method of combining compulsion for a portion of the Army with the voluntary raising of another portion for use oversea in time of peace. It is because of the necessities imposed upon us by our oversea Empire in peace that the conditions of Great Britain differ from those of other States. No one can seriously suppose that there would be any difficulty in using a conscript army oversea in time of war. But in peace-time the circumstances are very different, and the police force, the military reinforcement, call it what you will, that Great Britain is obliged to maintain abroad and at home in time of peace for Imperial purposes cannot be raised by any means other than that at present employed—that is to say, by the assent of the individuals of whom it is composed. What, then, is the alternative if the element of compulsion should be ruled out? Without the element of compulsion it is impossible to maintain within these islands a highly trained force on the Continental or new model. A half-trained force organized on conventional lines is *ex*

hypothesi useless when confronted by Continental troops. Are we, then, driven by the inexorable logic of experience and the facts of war to seek for safety in an Army of Irregulars, not semi-trained after the fashion of Regulars, but instructed in the main essentials of all Irregular troops—that is to say, to shoot straight and to use their knowledge of the manœuvring area in order to utilize to the fullest extent the rifle in concealed positions?

Would a plan of defensive war, based upon the *levée en masse* of a population taught in boyhood to bear arms, supplemented by a body of half-trained Territorial troops placed in prepared positions for coastal defence, stand the test of modern fighting under our island conditions?

This seems to be the problem requiring analysis and solution.

X.

In the course of these papers it has been suggested that the strategy and tactics of naval warfare require re-examination; that modern naval science, taking full advantage of submarine navigation and aircraft, may before long discard the battleship; and that sea command may not necessarily be found dependent upon the result of a fleet action such as Trafalgar or Tsushima.

The development of the submersible boat and of the airship may prove to the monster battleship what the invention of the rifle was to the man-at-arms; and a Dreadnought may shortly be as obsolete as coat-armour.

For purposes of coast defence and of combined attack, submarines and airships with a range of thousands of miles, armed and practically invisible, costing less than the twentieth of a Dreadnought, and thus producible in large numbers, may turn out in the immediate future to be the determining factor in the struggle for sea power.

The days of the naval tournament are wellnigh over, and the set rules of naval warfare will have to give place to tactics as full of surprise as were the tactics of the Black Prince and his archers to the French chivalry at Crécy, or those of Cronjé and De Wet to our gallant Aldershot commanders in the early stages of the South African War.

Men who set out to fight on sea or land, guided by fixed rules of strategy and tactics, almost invariably come to grief. The uses of military knowledge, of the science of war, and of historical military study, are confined to the single preparatory function of enabling a commander in battle to cope with an unexpected emergency. No two campaigns, no two battles, are ever alike. The great and successful commander is the man who, like Gustavus Adolphus or the Napoleon of 1796-1809, can discard shibboleths, recognize changed conditions, and confront the enemy with a novel situation embarrassing and possibly overwhelming.

Just as the conventional army inherited from the great Frederick (so potent in Silesia) was swept away by the conscript avalanche of the French at Jena, just as Napoleon's grand army was baffled and

ultimately destroyed by the "Fabian tactics" of Kutuzoff's Cossack hordes, and just as De Wet's and Botha's little groups of Boers, by an unexpected method of warfare, held long in check, and, under slightly more favourable conditions, might altogether have worn out the immense forces of Great Britain, so should the commander, equipped by imagination with foresight, utilize the innumerable and powerful resources of Great Britain to the destruction of an invader. No foreign foe setting foot on these shores ought ever to quit them. That axiom should be engraved over every British hearth.

In calculating the value and forecasting the uses of the Territorial Force, it is essential to assume that political exigencies have led to the absorption of the Regular Army, its Reserves, and accessories, by the call of war oversea. It is inconceivable that such a state of things should obtain in the earlier stages of any war in which this Empire is likely to be engaged; but as a war progresses, demands upon the armed resources of the country are certain to create a situation in which we shall have to rely for insular defence upon our maritime guard, and upon such home forces as we possess under our present organization.

It has been often explained that the Navy, so long as sea command has not been finally wrested from Great Britain, can protect her shores from invasion on a large scale. The amount of naval transport, and the consequent size of armed convoy, are so enormous for the passage oversea of an army

powerful enough to conquer 40 millions of people, and overawe them into accepting conquest, that the operation becomes impossible so long as a great and effective fleet keeps the sea. What is possible and conceivable is an attack, too strong to be called a mere raid, and too weak to be rightly called invasion, undertaken by a new enemy for the purpose of stultifying some prodigious effort which this country is making elsewhere for the maintenance of her Imperial security. Against such an attack we should be prepared.

If the naval scheme of defence is based upon the principles suggested in a former series of papers, and fleet action against the enemy is entirely separated from flotilla coast guardianship, attack by an enemy in large numbers should be rendered so difficult and dangerous that it would only be attempted in the spirit of forlorn hope. Suppose, however, that the maritime guard is pierced, and an enemy about 70,000 strong (this was the figure stated by Lord Roberts) were to effect a landing upon our shores, what are the forces with which such an enemy might have to contend? Although the maritime guard would have been evaded, it is certain that, once the alarm was given, the coastal flotillas (even if the fleet were elsewhere) would soon have cut all communication between the enemy's forces and their base. The attacking army would be *en l'air* in a hostile country, dependent for all its supplies upon itself and the invaded territory. Under any soundly planned scheme of home

defence, the country in front of an advancing enemy would be rapidly denuded of every source of supply and of every means of transport. Of what use are County Associations, recruited from the most capable and influential local sources, if they cannot organize territorial denudation of a thorough kind in the face of an advancing foe? They have under their hand the National Reserve, composed of men inured to discipline, and trained to arms with, it may be assumed, complete knowledge of local topography. Such a force, properly armed, supplied with ammunition, and adequately commanded and led as Irregulars, would be quite as efficient as Kutuzoff's Cossacks in 1812. Our own South African experience indicates the enormous difficulties likely to be experienced by an invader faced by determined and desperate bands of armed men, familiar with the use of the rifle, if they are properly disposed and skilfully led.

There are now 200,000 of these men registered for home service. There should be twice or thrice that number, and they could be obtained if it was known that arms were available for them at the outbreak of war, and if in peace they were under the tuition and guidance of an officer with the attributes of a Garibaldi or a Gordon, who would secure their confidence, give them some idea of their duties and functions, and who would handle them well should the occasion arise.

Against such a body of men, adopting tactics harassing and unwearied, an enemy would advance

slowly, subject to daily and nightly attrition, to all the pangs of disappointment, and to the gradual loss of morale. Even though a town was seized here, or even an arsenal destroyed there, the fate of an enemy, cut off from his base amidst a population so determined in character as our people, cannot be in doubt.

The backbone of our defence against an attack of the kind postulated, is, however, the Territorial Force. It is organized as an army—half-trained and indifferently officered, it is true—and is sufficient in numbers and well enough endowed with military ardour to inflict heavy losses upon such an enemy, even though it were unable to secure victory or even were to suffer defeat. And behind both these armed bodies of men, drawn together for the defence of their hearths and homes, numerically amounting to about half a million, handled (let us make this assumption) by a leader with one-half the capacity of Robert Lee or Stonewall Jackson, we have the balance of the male population of the country, every man, by that time ready to undertake, what at present he will not face, the defence of his native land.

What is the balance of chances in favour of an invasion? It is true—indeed, it is fairly certain—that a sustained invasion, supported from its base, might dispose of a defence grounded upon so irregular a plan and so faulty a principle, judged by Continental standards.

That Great Britain is an island and her people

islanders is the assumption upon which all speculative schemes of defence have hitherto been based. In order to defend an island, sea power and sea command are essential and vital. Maintain them, and, although a damaging attack by an enemy is a possibility against which armed military force is desirable and necessary, successful invasion is impossible. Lose them, and for reasons inseparable from the conditions that govern an insular people, fed and provided by oversea commerce, the most numerous and best equipped army in the world cannot save a nation from disaster and possibly from destruction.

Behind Great Britain, however, stands Greater Britain, and no statesmen can ignore the land frontier of the Empire.

MODERN WAR AND PEACE.*

I WANT to read to you a passage from the work of a living writer with whom you all should be, and probably are, well acquainted.

I must ask you to put yourselves for a moment in the position of men nearing home, after a long sea voyage, and running up-channel before a strong south-westerly gale. This is the passage I wish to quote:

"At night the headlands retreated, the bays advanced into one unbroken line of gloom. The lights of the earth mingled with the lights of heaven; and above the tossing lanterns of a trawling fleet a great lighthouse shone steadily, such as an enormous riding light burning above a vessel of fabulous dimensions. Below its steady glow, the coast, stretching away straight and black, resembled the high side of an indestructible craft riding motionless upon the immortal and unresting sea. The dark land lay alone in the midst of the waters, like a mighty ship bestarred with vigilant lights—a ship carrying the burden of millions of lives—a ship freighted with dross and with jewels, with gold and with steel. She towered up immense and strong, guarding priceless traditions and untold suffering, sheltering glorious memories and base forgetfulness, ignoble virtues and splendid

* A lecture delivered at Cambridge University, 1912, and at Glasgow, 1913.

transgressions. A great ship! For ages had the ocean battered in vain her enduring sides; she was there when the world was vaster and darker, when the sea was great and mysterious, and ready to surrender the prize of fame to audacious men. A ship mother of fleets and nations! The great flagship of the race; stronger than the storms, and anchored in the open sea."

I hope you will agree that these eloquent words describe a love of country, a form of patriotism of which no one has cause to be ashamed, not blatant or vulgar, but respectable, sincere and true.

If I thought that Norman Angell's teaching sapped the foundations of patriotism such as this, or tended to destroy the love of individual or national liberty, or weakened the desire of young men to learn the art of fighting for the purpose of protecting their homes and the homes of their kindred oversea from attack or conquest, I should not be here to-night.

If I thought that in the world's present state of martial unrest, his teaching would induce our people to abandon building those great fleets that preserve these Islands from attack and keep the ocean-way free for British commerce, I should look upon Norman Angell as an enemy of our race and country.

For more years than I care to count I have been engaged in helping to perfect the machinery of war, and to sharpen the weapons with which men on the sea and land go out to maim and kill one another. May I then put it thus, that I am here

because in the big affairs of mankind logic holds a subordinate place, and because inconsistency happens to be the rule of active and healthy life.

No sane mind can fail to be aware that we are not living in an ideal world, but in a world of hard and brutal facts; and the hardest and most brutal of all these facts is, that after 2,000 years of philosophy and of Christ's teaching, men are still governed mainly by passion and only occasionally by reason. Fortunately there is no cause to despair. The mill grinds slowly, but the wheel keeps moving.

I am not proposing to discuss with you the philosophy of Norman Angell's thesis, but rather its practical bearing upon the relation of European States under normal conditions, as we find them to-day, and especially upon the circumstances of Great Britain and her immediate neighbours on the Continent of Europe.

Napoleon called war a drama. He used that phrase when thinking of the great European conflicts of which he himself was the moving spirit and protagonist. We should rather say that modern war between civilized peoples, enlightened as they are in these days, and interdependent as they are upon each other, is not a Drama but a Tragedy only comparable to some immortal Trilogy in which men, from no fault of their own, but owing to a deep inherited tendency, find themselves enmeshed in the web of Fate.

Are we not justified in taking this view when we consider that to-day in Europe no Potentate or Statesman desires war, that the masses of the

people in every powerful State dislike War and fear it, and that nevertheless we constantly find ourselves shivering on its brink? Some glimmering of reason warns us that War, and as Norman Angell explains, even victorious war, spells disaster, and yet we speak of it always as inevitable and sometimes with expectancy. If George Meredith is justified in saying that "when men's brains are insufficient to meet the exigencies of affairs, they fight," you can well understand that given the casual methods of politicians and the clouded atmosphere of political strife, the failure of reason to withstand the assault of prejudice and passion is not so strange or unaccountable.

Norman Angell is engaged in the difficult task of strengthening, of putting a higher degree of vitality into the rational consideration of the problems of War and Peace. When considering and analyzing his brilliant and often dazzling argument, we must not permit ourselves to forget that in private life the measure, the balance of loss and gain, although telling in the long run, does not by any means always dominate men's actions. If this were not the case, how explain the spendthrift and the gambler?

Similarly, economic forces, in spite of their predominant results, over long spaces of time, do not from day to day and from hour to hour govern the policy of nations, or nullify the effects of sentiment, of passion, or of resentment. These are the lions in the path of Peace.

If, therefore, we are calmly and with profit to discuss the "Great Illusion," as Mr. Norman Angell has called his essay upon the economic results to both vanquished and victor in a war between highly civilized European States, we should, I suggest to you, keep steadily in our own minds the realities of life, and make it clear to ourselves that we are not living in a philosophic vacuum.

Men write and speak of disarmament. The most ardent advocate of peace, if to-morrow he were called to the helm of State, and were to find himself made answerable for the security of these Islands, and faced with their vast population, and their historic past, with the pledges given by their statesmen to subject races, and the potentialities of their future, could not in the present condition of Europe and of the world, venture to disarm.

Further, if he were conscientious, prudent, and frank, he would explain to his countrymen the dangers they are bound to provide against and the risks they periodically run, owing to their inveterate love of minding other people's business, coupled with their own complacent faith in luck and in their capacity to pull through any emergency; and having done this, he would set about perfecting our National Defences. This has always been the hard fate of the pacifist statesman, who was not a mere theorist, when brought up short by the actualities of the world.

I am well aware that another view may be taken of the duty of a protagonist in the cause of peace.

It may be said that a statesman worthy of the name, and caring above all causes for that of peace, should not fear to put his faith to the touch. A firmer belief in the verity of his cause, a loftier conception of the power of ideas over men's actions, a deeper insight into the results of confidence on a grand scale, would lead him to the conclusion that to disarm was not to run any desperate risk, and that even if that were the case, he should be ready to take it. See, such a man would argue, the effect in other but analogous spheres of a sublime trust in the higher motives and instincts of mankind, and observe the recent examples in the history of our race and land. He might admit that analogy is generally a trap for the unwary, but he would emphasize the history of the past few decades, and show that trust in the people, that great political discovery of the nineteenth century, has never miscarried. For instance, although it is generally admitted that political power, to be well and safely used, should only be entrusted to an educated people, who is unaware that our statesmen enfranchize first and educate afterwards? Yet it would be difficult to prove that as a nation we should have made better progress if the Educational Acts of 1870 had preceded the Reform Bill of 1832.

In recent years there has been even a more glaring case of the noble chance that high statesmanship permits itself occasionally to take. It required a mighty act of faith to grant a free constitution to South Africa, and to entrust un-

fettered political powers to the people we had just fought and defeated. Yet there are not many men who would now propose to go back upon that courageous and disinterested policy.

This would be the argument of our idealist, and he would refer, with great force, to these examples of a political faith that has been able successfully to move mountains of political prejudice.

We can, perhaps, none of us imagine any policy finer and more noble in conception than the reasoned determination of a great people, convinced of the folly of war, to disarm, for the sake of example, in the face of the armed nations of the European Continent. It is a sad but inevitable anti-climax to have to conclude that the adoption by any responsible statesman of such a policy would be not only one of madness and of grave self-indulgence, but of national betrayal. I fear that the pages of our own history, the bitter teaching of experience, and a clear conception of that world of actuality of which the British nation forms part, can only lead us to the conclusion, that however ardently we desire the Norman Angell propaganda to force its way into the minds of men, we cannot during the years of inevitable transition afford to cast away the sword.

The risk is one from which the most courageous idealist would rightly shrink. After all, if the experiment in South Africa had failed, its failure might have plunged this country into serious difficulties, but the problem of British rule would still

have been soluble, and no irremediable harm would have been done.

On the other hand, to disarm, by way of political experiment, and to find your experiment fail would be to inflict such complete disaster and such irrecoverable losses upon our country that no Englishman can bear to contemplate them, and no statesman would dare to face them.

There is some analogy, good enough for our purpose, between the conditions of Europe to-day and the condition of England in the Middle Ages, cursed with the internecine conflicts of the Baronage. What feudal lord would then have dared, within the disturbed area of these Islands, to level his defences, in reliance upon the generous appreciation or upon the pacific instincts of his neighbours? It was not by that path that peace was sought and ensued. In order to bring to a conclusion the state of normal warfare then prevailing, and in order to substitute the procedure of a higher civilization for methods of barbarism, it required external pressure from our Tudor Sovereigns, drastic in method and consistent in application.

In order to pacificate Europe, in order to hold in check the militant ardour of diplomatic chancelleries and the recklessness of a combative Press, to what quarter can we then look to provide a substitute for the commercial instincts of a Tudor King, backed by the energies of a growing middle class and of a long-suffering peasantry? To what powerful influences can we turn, with hope and expectancy

that they will put an end to those armed and provocative relations between the great Powers in Europe that to-day reflect sadly upon our common civilization?

This brings me, by a process which I hope has not been too tiresome, to the objects and aims of the Society which I have the honour to address.

If, as I indicated a few moments ago, the strongest influence at the present time upon the actions of civilized nations is educated public opinion, and if, as some contend, ideas have never exercised a more potent sway over events than now, it is to this irresistible force of public opinion that we must look for an equivalent to the power that crushed feudalism, with all its combativeness and unrest.

It is the main object of your Society to create and to educate public opinion. It is not, as I understand, your sole object. There is a preliminary task to be performed by your members before you let loose the spirit of your propaganda. That preliminary task is, I gather from your literature, to test Norman Angell's theories by the means of discussion and examination, and especially to enquire into the truth of his contention that what were axioms of statesmanship in the eighteenth century have become absurdities in the twentieth.

The most distinguished of the living sons of this University put the case to me thus: "The doctrine which, as I understand it, Norman Angell desires to impress upon the civilized nations of the world is that aggressive warfare, undertaken

for the purpose of making the aggressor happier, wealthier and more prosperous, is not only wrong but silly."

That is the doctrine which your Society has been formed to examine, and if you are satisfied that it is true, to testify before the world.

I am not concerned with and I am anxious to refrain from discussing the various aspects of the "Great Illusion." I have only mentioned its main thesis in order to make clear that the primary work of this Society is to examine the practical effect of the economic aspects of that work and to carry forward to a further stage such truths as may be found in Norman Angell's economics which can be of service to this country and to mankind.

When I was an undergraduate of this College no one was ever invited to examine an economic theory. In those days we were taught that political economy was an exact science, and it would never have occurred to any but the most cynical to question the main propositions of its votaries. You live, fortunately for yourselves, in an atmosphere of more enlightened criticism. It is desirable, indeed it is essential, that every point made by Norman Angell should be subjected to careful scrutiny if his doctrine is ever to be translated into the language of practical statesmanship. When, for instance, he makes such a statement as this—"that the wealth of conquered territory *always* remains in the hands of the inhabitants"; and when he proceeds to draw the inference that

no territory is therefore worth annexing, I suggest to you that considerable qualification must be made before such a doctrine will be accepted by those responsible for the direction of State affairs in this or any other country. It is unlikely, it is scarcely possible for a man to write with such enthusiasm and with such fulness as Norman Angell without occasionally creating a false impression of his real meaning, but among your Society's functions is the invaluable one of winnowing the wheat from the chaff.

May I suggest to you a specially dangerous misunderstanding to which Norman Angell's argument may also lead. He lays much stress upon the effects of war upon the individual as distinct from the nation. He draws attention over and over again to the condition of the individual citizen of a victorious or conquered State. Would this man be richer or poorer? Would that man profit or lose by victory or defeat? are questions which he is continually posing. They are indeed worth examination, and there is perhaps no surer method of guiding the discussions of your Society along a path consistent with our national safety than for you to consider how far a nation, which undoubtedly is composed of individuals, is a corporate reality, and to what extent as a corporate reality it is able to suffer or to triumph.

Norman Angell would, I am sure, be the last to claim that he has exhausted his own subject. What he has done is to write a remarkable and

stimulating book that cannot fail to produce practical results in the hands of men, of younger men, who come after him.

Years ago Professor Seeley in his "Expansion of England" produced a work that in the hands of Cecil Rhodes, as Rhodes himself often admitted, led directly to the addition of Rhodesia to the Empire and indirectly to the unity of South Africa under the British flag. The "Expansion of England" focussed the eyes of our people on the work they had been unconsciously performing. The British Empire had grown and was growing fast, but its growth was, pictorially speaking, silent and unperceived. Professor Seeley's book illumined the process, and among its many effects produced that to which I have already alluded. In that case the voice was Seeley's, but the hands were those of Cecil Rhodes. It may be that among those present here to-night there may be one who, stimulated by the discussions of your Society and assisted by its propaganda, will do for the cause of European peace what Cecil Rhodes did for the further expansion of our Empire. In that case the voice will have been Norman Angell's, but the hands we must leave to the future to determine.

Of one thing I am convinced, and it is that the moment is not unripe, and that the minds of men at home and all over the Continent are in a state of singular receptivity for this economic aspect of the doctrine of Peace.

I have had an opportunity of listening to very

confidential enquiries into, and discussions of, the economic effects upon our trade, commerce, and finance on the outbreak of a European war in which we ourselves might be engaged. This enquiry extended over many months, and many of the wealthiest and most influential men of business from the cities of the United Kingdom were called to give evidence before those whose duty it was to conclude and report.

I am sure that very few, if any, of those eminent witnesses had read his book, but by some mysterious process the virus of Norman Angell was working in their minds, for one after the other these magnates of commerce and of finance corroborated by their fears and anticipations the doctrine of the "Great Illusion."

If this is the mental atmosphere of the cities of London and Glasgow at the prospect of war, is it not reasonable to assume that the moment is propitious, and that there is a tremendous chance for young and ardent spirits, just of your age, to reap a splendid harvest?

And if we look abroad, across, let us say, the North Sea, the conditions are equally favourable. It is well known that in August, 1911, this country was on the brink of war. What is not so well known is, that the most powerful and restraining force exercised in Germany in the interests of peace was the influence of the great commercial and financial houses that have done business with our people, that have competed with our people,

over the surface of the globe, and who are in the habit of looking to London as their clearing-house, and to English financial houses as their bankers and correspondents.

Germany, I am confident, will prove just now as receptive as Great Britain to the doctrine of Norman Angell.

A few moments ago I mentioned a certain enquiry into the various aspects and effects of modern war, at which persons of distinction were present, some of them holding offices of great responsibility, but who up to the present had not been specially concerned with these questions or specially obliged to consider them.

It was interesting to see how little at first they grasped the realities of modern war. They were under the impression, quite a vague impression, that war was a business in which soldiers and sailors were deeply concerned, but which left ordinary civilians free to pursue their avocations under more or less normal conditions. They remembered the South African War, and recollected how even in the last weeks of 1899 and the first weeks of the present century, when our armies in South Africa were in some jeopardy, business and even pleasure went on very much as usual. They were also aware that in the Crimean and Napoleonic wars, when British armies were fighting on the Continent of Europe, some ripple of the hardships then endured reached these shores, but the civilian population left the fighting to the professional

soldier and beyond paying the bill felt very little the worse for the conflict.

Modern war, however, seemed now to be an altogether different proposition. It was quite a novel idea that war with a nation in arms like modern Germany, under modern conditions of trade and finance, might mean, even under favourable circumstances, complete stoppage of our Continental and of our Imperial trade, the temporary ruin of tens of thousands of operatives in the midland and northern counties, and the closing of the Thames to British shipping, with incalculable results to the provision of supplies for London and the home counties, and in fact complete confusion in the domestic economy of the State. Still more startling was the vision of a possible transfer, perhaps permanently, from London to New York of that enormous mass of financial business which, on behalf of the whole mercantile and commercial world, we at present transact in the metropolis of our Empire.

As I have said, it was a surprise to these men of eminence and experience in the government of the country that modern war on a large scale, even if successfully waged, might demand such enormous sacrifices from the civilian population. They had always hitherto believed that all the pains and penalties of war could be imposed upon a professional class that was paid and trained to bear them. This delusion is unfortunately shared by millions of our fellow-countrymen, and it should be

one of the functions of your Society to destroy it. The economic effects, in minute detail, likely to be immediately experienced in Great Britain, in Canada, and in Australia, on the outbreak of a war between Great Britain and Germany are well worth your attention and some study at the hands of Norman Angell himself. In short, the more the circumstances attending the outbreak of modern war between highly civilized communities are inquired into and studied the better are the chances of the maintenance of peace. These considerations all help to create an atmosphere for your propaganda.

Even the grouping of the six most powerful States in Europe into two apparently hostile camps is, on the whole, some guarantee of peace. There is always, as I have said, a chance of some act of madness precipitating a war. But on the whole the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente have their origin in a desire to avoid war. From one point of view these well-known expressions indicate two great armed camps, but from another they imply two groupings of nations anxious to keep the peace.

In this very grouping of the Powers there is good augury for the future. If you could imagine Europe to consist at this moment of only Great Britain, France, and Russia, all of them haunted by some external menace from the Far East or West, there would be no overwhelming difficulty in obtaining agreement to a plan of internal dis-

armament that would reduce the fear of conflict within the area of Europe to a negligible quantity while leaving the combined Powers practically secure from attack oversea.

If Europe consisted to-day only of Germany, Austria and Italy it might perhaps be even less difficult for these Powers to arrive at a similar understanding. Is it too extravagant a suggestion that an agreement based on partial disarmament which appears not wholly impracticable within the orbit of the Triple Alliance on the one hand, or that of the Triple Entente on the other, might still be practical and possible if the two groups could be drawn together by the centrifugal force of some great explanatory and illuminating doctrine? I am making no attempt to argue or elaborate, but merely to throw out this suggestion for examination and discussion by your Society.

Finally, I cannot refrain from touching upon the panopy of war, and its allurements. This is a point I believe ignored by Norman Angell, but which demands some consideration from you. No one can be blind to those martial qualities of valour and self-sacrifice that war demands of her victims, but it too frequently happens that men enamoured of peaceful avocations, and zealous in the cause of peace, are apt to under-estimate, among antagonistic forces, the strength of the poetic and romantic aspects of the clash of arms. One cannot avoid the suspicion that to ignore, and even to minimize these attributes of a martial phase in the world's

progress and in the evolution of mankind, is to display an enfeebled spirit and an impoverished imagination. There is very little to be said for a man who can look unmoved upon a shrine raised by infinite pains and with immeasurable labour, to a dying faith.

I am reminded* of a passage in a lecture delivered many years ago (it shows how sometimes a phase sticks in a boy's mind) by a famous master in the old round school at Eton, a room that no one present here to-night probably remembers except myself. He was speaking of the landing of William of Orange in Torbay, and the phrase was this: "All the poetry, all the romance, all the beauty, was on the side of the Stuarts"; then the lecturer paused, and added: "All the common sense was on the other side." There is no need for me to point the moral.

The title of your Society appears to me to cover a duty and an aspiration—the duty of every young man sound in heart and mind to submit himself to be trained to bear arms for his home and country against unprovoked attack; an aspiration that he may personally help to allay the provocative spirit in men of his own race, and live to utilize every ounce of intellectual and moral strength in the cause of Peace.

* By a friend with a better memory than mine.

LA GUERRE ET LA PAIX*

QUELQUES FACTEURS NOUVEAUX DE LA POLITIQUE INTERNATIONALE

AVANT d'entamer mon sujet, Mesdames et Messieurs, permettez-moi de réclamer votre indulgence. Je suis étranger, et anglais. Le point de vue de nos deux pays est si différent, et cela s'explique par leurs dissemblances respectives en ce qui concerne le tempérament, l'éducation, les conditions climatériques, voire même peut-être, les conditions physiologiques.

Ce n'est pas chose facile que d'amener, dans le cours d'une conférence de moins d'une heure, nos deux points de vue à posséder une identité parfaite ; et c'est pourquoi je vous prierai de me pardonner lorsque, pour votre esprit national si net et si clair, ce que j'aurai à dire pourra sembler quelque peu embrouillé ou obscur.

Ce qui me manquera, veuillez le mettre sur le compte des brouillards d'outre-Manche, et ne pas l'attribuer à un défaut de sympathie, ou à un manque d'appréciation des intérêts communs qui lient nos deux nations d'une façon si étroite.

Mon sujet sera la guerre et la paix. Ce sont là

* Discours prononcé par Viscount Esher, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., à la Sorbonne. Vendredi, 27 Mars, 1914.

deux mots redoutables ; ils évoquent les terreurs du passé, ils font naître des craintes pour le présent, mais ils inspirent aussi les plus grandes espérances pour l'avenir.

Mon but d'aujourd'hui est de faire appel aux étudiants, à la jeunesse fraçaise. Je veux demander à celle-ci d'examiner certains facteurs économiques récemment intervenus dans la situation internationale, et qui, s'ils sont réels, doivent provoquer un bouleversement complet dans la politique des états telle qu'elle a été conçue et comprise jusqu'ici.

Afin de préparer mon terrain et pour éviter tout malentendu, disons immédiatement que si l'examen de ces faits nouveaux prouve clairement l'inanité des guerres d'agression entre nations civilisées, il ne justifie, en aucune façon, ni une diminution, ni une restriction quelconque dans les armements. Il ne résulte pas davantage de cet examen qu'il faille desserrer le lien des alliances ou des ententes, ou qu'il faille réduire d'un seul homme les effectifs de la défense nationale, soit chez vous, soit chez nous.

Je ne viens pas ici prêcher la paix à outrance ; je ne viens pas rabaisser ce patriotisme vraiment noble qui exalte les vertus civiques, qui se fait une gloire des grandes œuvres nationales accomplies dans la sphère des sciences, dans celle de l'art ou de la philosophie, qui enfin se glorifie de cet accroissement de bonheur pour l'humanité, que l'on désigne sous le nom de progrés.

Il existe un vaste champ d'action réservé à l'individualisme national (je ne trouve pas de meilleur mot), dans le domaine de l'imagination et des idées,

bien que les exigences actuelles de la démocratie et les besoin de la civilisation moderne puissent donner naissance à l'action collective, but qu'aperçoivent déjà bien des esprits supérieurs et virils.

La doctrine que je vais vous prier d'examiner, est contenue dans les paroles du plus éminent de nos hommes d'état vivants, celui qui à été, pendént de nombreuses années, à la tête du parti conservateur en Angleterre.

Voici ce qu'il dit:

La guerre d'agression entreprise entre nations civilisées dans le but d'augmenter le bonheur, la richesse et la prospérité de l'agresseur, est à la fois inutile et stupide.

Sans dogmatiser, continue-t-il sur l'effet que la guerre a produit dans le développement de l'homme —un sujet plein d'intérêt—il n'y a pas à douter que dans les conditions actuelles de l'industrie et de la finance, les nations civilisées, ne soient si étroitement liées ensemble par la communauté de certains intérêts, que toute rupture violente dans les rapports d'amitié doit nécessairement provoquer des désastres chez tous les intéressés; désastres que ni les indemnités, ni les accroissements de territoire, ni les arcs de triomphe, ne pourront jamais compenser.

Si nous exposons la thèse ainsi, vous en sentez la nouveauté. Il faut un esprit jeune et souple pour saisir tous les attraits qu'elle possède, toutes les espérances qu'elle fait naître. Mais je vous demande de l'examiner avec impartialité et de n'accepter à priori comme incontestables ni les faits anciens ni les faits nouveaux.

Treitschke—ce Machiavel moderne—a dit que:

"Dans un âge de fer, se proposer la paix comme but suprême n'est pas simplement caresser une chimère, mais bien résister en aveugle à la loi de la vie, loi fatale qui condamne le faible à être écrasé par le fort.

"Il continue: La guerre est la meilleure école du devoir; et il n'est pas seulement insensé, il est immoral de prêcher contre elle. Il ajoute: Frédéric le Grand a raison lorsqu'il dit que la guerre produit le champ le plus fertile, ouvert à toutes les vertues: à la constance, à la compassion, à l'élévation des sentiments, à la noblesse du cœur, à la charité."

Voilà le dogme tragique contenu dans la "Real Politik."

Pour beaucoup d'esprits modernes, ces sentiments ont cependant une valeur réelle et ne sont point de simples phrases. C'est là l'importance qu'ils possèdent. Toutefois le sophisme du Grand Frédéric pourrait également justifier l'esclavage, ou s'appliquer aux combats néfastes du Colisée.

"La guerre et l'esprit de bravoure," a dit un autre écrivain moderne,—le Général von Bernhardi, "ont accompli plus de grandes choses que l'amour du prochain."

N'est-ce pas là, en plein vingtième siècle, une étrange invocation à l'esprit du moyen age? Combien alors conservent encore de leur valeur, les pensées et les écrits de Bayle, de Rousseau et de Montesquieu? Mais le bon sens doit l'emporter à la longue, et ces illustres écrivains français, producteurs d'œuvres puissantes, ont pressenti la thèse que je vous présente autourd'hui.

Ils ont signalé cet épuisement immodéré qu'engendre la guerre avec ses longs et incessants préparatifs.

Ils ont insisté sur les maux qui sont les fruits de la guerre et dont souffrent les masses chez les peuples belligérants. Ils se sont surtout efforcés de démontrer que, lorsque la guerre est terminée, après avoir détruit et dévasté à l'infini, après avoir épuisé l'or et l'énergie, alors survient la paix; cette même paix que la simple raison aurait pu suggérer dès le commencement.

Certains prétendent cependant qu'aux heures de crises nationales, ce n'est pas la sagesse des raisonnements qui fait pencher la balance: ce sont plutôt les passions, les intérêts, les évènements extérieurs, et ce quelque chose de vague, de non défini, d'étrange, de presque mystérieux que parmi les peuples on nomme instinct politique.

Mais il ne faut pas se laisser tromper par les phrases. Essayez donc, je voue prie, de bien déterminer, si cela est possible, ce que signifie l'instinct politique. Demandez-vous si l'on ne pourrait pas, comme pour l'instinct religieux, par exemple, le cultiver, le modérer, le changer.

Voyez le monde qui nous entoure, celui, où nous vivons: voyez ses transformations rapides, son développement stupéfiant. A peine puis-je parfois évoquer à mes yeux le Paris de ma jeunesse. Quelle est donc la valeur véritable, précise que possède un appel à l'expérience acquise? Qu'est ce que valent les précédents historiques, ou l'étude de la diplomatie

de nos ancêtres, au sein d'une société qui se transforme tellement, que ce qui s'appliquait à hier ne convient déjà plus á aujourd'hui ?

De nouvelles découvertes scientifiques, celles que l'on a faites en pathologie et en chimie ont complètement changé les habitudes du monde civilisé. " Découverte,"—ce mot ne suppose-t-il pas, lui-même, certains secrets demeurés, de tout temps, cachés dans les replis du manteau de la Nature ?

De même dans la physiologie des races, dans notre façon habituelle d'envisager le monde, dans les rapports internationaux, nous nous trouvons en présence d'autres phénomènes encore qui n'ont pu être découverts par un Lord Lister ou par une Madame Curie, car ils sont nés d'hier, enfantés par l'évolution créatrice.

Au sein de tant de variations, parmi tant de changements radicaux, ne va-t-on pas trop loin en prétendant que ce mystérieux instinct politique, coupable d'avoir jusqu' à présent poussé les nations aux conflits, ne pourrait pas, grâce à des conditions toutes nouvelles, décider ces mêmes peuples à signer un accord, à accepter un compromis ?

A vrai dire, pouvons-nous affirmer aujourd'hui que l'instinct politique de la démocratie, qui vient d'ouvrir les yeux à la vie après quelque trente ans consacrés à son éducation, ne diffère pas absolument de l'instinct politique prôné par le Général von Bernhardi ?

La France a toujours été au premier rang pour la révision de l'idéal. Les théories fondamentales

des penseurs français du dix-huitième siècle servent en réalité de lieux communs au monde moderne. Il semble donc que le moment soit venu de considérer à nouveau, de rajuster nos idées sur ce que valent respectivement la guerre et la paix, le patriotisme et la gloire militaire, et aussi la voie à prendre par cette marche ascendante que nous nommons le progrès.

Qui songerait, par exemple, à dénigrer le patriotisme ; si ce mot signifie respect pour l'histoire de la France, amour de son Sol National, loyauté envers son idéal, et fierté envers son avenir. Mais le cœur et l'âme animés du plus noble des patriotismes ne demeurent pas clos à d'autres sympathies.

Vous vous souvenez de cette page admirable de "93" dans laquelle Victor Hugo, analyse les luttes de la Vendée.

"Pays, Patrie,—ces deux mots résument toute la guerre de Vendée ; querelle "de l'idée locale contre l'idée universelle ; paysans contre patriotes."

L'illustre maître n'entend pas par là déprécier l'amour du pays natal, ou le caractère du paysan ; mais il veut nous prémunir contre toute étroitesse de sympathie et d'âme. Il est possible d'être en même temps paysan et patriote.

Dirons-nous toutefois que la gloire militaire est indispensable au patriotisme ? Question délicate, c'est vrai, mais question vitale pour certains esprits. Eh bien, un homme manque surement d'ampleur d'imagination, et peut avec justice être accusé de sécheresse d'âme, s'il peut, sans un trésaillement,

songer aux gloires de la guerre, à ses lauriers, à ses sacrifices. Les troublantes émotions de ce genre ne détruisent pas nécessairement en nous le sentiment de la perspective. Qui pourrait oublier cette scène de l'œuvre épique de Tolstoy : le prince Andrée, blessé à mort, est étendu muet sur le champ de bataille d'Austerlitz ; il voit penché vers lui, Napoléon son incomparable héros, si chétif, si insignifiant, en comparaison de ce qui se passé à ce moment entre son âme et les profondeurs sans limites du ciel chargé d'étoiles. C'est une autre évocation de cette image immortelle du poète Lucrèce. La bataille vue du haut de la colline n'est plus qu'une poignée de poussière.

Il est alors bon de se demander sans cesse si la gloire militaire est un élément essentiel de la gloire nationale.

Est-il indispensable de faire revivre la politique d'un Richelieu, la grandeur d'un Louis XIV ou les conquêtes de Napoléon, pour permettre à la France de conserver fièrement sa place parmi l'élite des nations ? Ou bien tout cela s'est-il évanoui comme les neiges d'antan ?

Certes il ne faut pas oublier ces compensations, ces exploits brillants dans le domaine de l'imagination, domaine où La France ne rencontre que peu d'égaux et point de maîtres.

Et puissions-nous reconnaître ensemble que l'amour de la patrie n'est pas incompatible avec cette idée qui franchit les frontières du pays natal l'amour de l'humanité, l'idée universelle.

Heureusement, on ne doit pas oublier de compter la raison parmi les forces agissantes de la vie. Nous ne devons pas non plus ignorer les livres.

Parmi la grande masse des œuvres qui s'impriment, on en rencontre quelques unes que l'on peut considérer plutôt comme des actes que comme des écrits. Le "Contrat Social" est sans contredit de ce nombre, et si vous me le permettez, je citerai également un autre livre,—"La Grande Illusion,"—œuvre d'un de mes compatriotes, M. Norman Angell.

L'impression que cette œuvre a produite a été prodigieuse. Sa publication a provoqué, en Angleterre, dans nos universités un mouvement immédiat. D'abord, ce sont les étudiants de l'université de Cambridge, qui, de concert avec quelques jeunes professeurs, ont formé une société dans le but d'encourager l'étude systématique de la question; et l'impulsion donnée a trouvé un écho dans presque toutes les universités d'Angleterre.

Puis à Manchester, la capitale industrielle de mon pays, une vaste organisation régionale s'est constituée sous l'égide du Président de la Chambre de Commerce, et du Lord Maire. De même à Glasgow, la capitale commerciale de l'Ecosse, les représentant du haut commerce et de la finance se sont réunis en association pour discuter l'idée fondamentale de la thèse d'Angell.

Aujourd'hui, il se trouve sur le territoire de la Grande-Bretagne quarante cercles d'études, ou sociétés, composés d'homme sérieux, de professeurs et d'étudiants d'une part, de commercants et de

financiers de l'autre, s'adonnant à l'examen de l'effet produit sur la question de la guerre et de la paix, par "interdépendance" croissante des grandes puissances européennes.

Ces cercles d'études sont affiliés à une organisation centrale crée à Londres par Sir Richard Garton, candidat conservateur aux élections parlementaires, et soutenue par Mr. Balfour, ancien Premier Ministre conservateur.

Ce mouvement ayant pris naissance sous de pareilles auspices n'a aucune tendance anti-patriotique ou anti-militariste. Cette affirmation me semble importante pour établir le caractère de ce mouvement qui est tout à fait expérimental et en quelque sorte scientifique.

Quelle est donc la thèse d'Angell, et quelle est la question fondamentale soulevée par La Grande Illusion ?

Elle résulte des déductions faites par une certaine école d'économie politique qui étudie tout spécialement les rapports entre la puissance militaire et le bien-être social ; les relations qui existent entre la conquête par les armes et l'acroissement de la prospérité commerciale et financière ; et enfin la question de savoir si, par suite des changements survenus tout récemment et affectant les puissances civilisées de l'Europe et de l'Orient, certains axiômes politiques acceptés jusqu'ici par tous les gouvernements ne devraient pas être soumis à une révision.

Quels sont donc ces axiômes ?

Il importe que je vous lise, même au risque de

vous fatiguer, le résumé que nous en donne Angell lui-même. Le voici :

" Chaque nation, pour justifier ses propres armements, invoque la nécessité où elle serait de se défendre. Or, cette necessité implique qu'il y a d'autres nations qui croient avoir quelque intérêt à prendrè l'offensive, car la défense n'a de sens que s'il y a une attaque préalable. Quels sont les mobiles que les nations attribuent aux voisins dont elles se méfient ainsi ?

" On déduit ces mobiles de la présomption générale que toute nation est portée à se répandre au dehors et à employer sa force contre les autres. A cause de l'obligation où elle est de trouver des territoires et des débouchés pour une population et une industrie toujours croissantes ou bien encore, tout simplement, pour procurer à sa population les conditions d'existence les plus favorables. C'est ainsi que l'augmentation de la marine allemande est envisagée en Europe comme le signe évident du besoin pressant qu'a une population croissante d'obtenir une plus large place dans le monde. Ce besoin chercherait à se satisfaire aux dépens du commerce et des possessions coloniales de la Grande-Bretagne, si celles-ci n'étaient pas suffisamment défendues, et l'on en déduit cette conséquence que la prospérité d'une nation est en raison directe de sa puissance politique : que l'avantage, en dernier ressort, dans un conflit entre nations considérées commes des unités qui se font concurrence, appartient à celle qui possède la supériorité, car la plus faible succombera dans ce conflit, comme dans toutes les autres formes de la lutte pour la vie."

Je vais vous citer maintenant un exposé sommaire donné par Angell, de la réfutation de ces mêmes axiômes :

"Le commerce et l'industrie d'un peuple ne dépendent plus de l'étendue de ses frontières politiques; la puissance militaire est désormais illusoire en matière économique et n'influe en rien sur la prospérité du peuple qui l'exerce; une nation ne peut plus s'emparer par la force de la fortune ou du commerce d'une autre nation, ni s'enrichir en la subjuguant ou en lui imposant sa volonté.

"La thèse se résume en un mot comme suit: la guerre ne peut aujourd'hui, aider en rien les hommes, qu'ils soient conquérants ou conquis, à atteindre aucun des divers buts qu'ils poursuivent.

"Cette thèse, qui paraît paradoxale, est établie en montrant, en ce qui concerne le problème économique, que la richesse des pays civilisés repose sur le crédit, et sur la foi des contrats commerciaux, qui sont eux-mêmes nés de cette interdépendance économique qu'ont produite la division du travail toujours plus grande, et les communications toujours plus développés.

"Si, par une tentative de confiscation, l'on empêche l'exécution des contrats commerciaux, ou si l'on touche tant soit peu au crédit dont dépend la fortune publique, cette fortune disparaît, entraînant avec elle celle du conquérant.

"De telle sorte que, pour que la conquête ne nuise pas au conquérant lui-même, il faut que celui-ci respecte la propriété de l'ennemi. Désormais toute conquête est une entreprise vaine au point de vue économique, puisque la richesse d'un pays conquis doit rester aux mains de ses habitants. La conquête dans le monde moderne est un procédé par lequel on multiplie d'abord par x pour diviser ensuite par le même chiffre.

"Encore, les intérêts financiers internationaux sont si intimement liés à ceux du commerce et de l'industrie, qu'un conquérant ne peut pas d'avantage toucher au commerce de l'ennemi qu'aux propriétés particulières de celui-ci. Il ressort que la

prééminence politique et militaire ne peut rien procurer au commerce. Les négociants et les industriels des petites nations qui n'ont aucun pouvoir politique soutiennent avec succès la concurrence contre ceux des grandes puissances: les Suisses et les Belges chassent les Anglais de leurs propres marchés coloniaux; proportionellement à sa population, la Norvege a une marine marchande supérieure à celle de la Grande-Bretagne; le crédit publique des petits Etats dont le pouvoir politique est nul, est supérieur au crédit public des grandes puissances de l'Europe.

"Les mêmes causes, qui ont rendu la puissance militaire futile au point de vue économique, l'ont aussi rendue illusoire en ce qui concerne les idées et les mœurs qu'on prétendrait imposer à un peuple conquis. Le sécurité dans la jouissance de la propriété privée (à laquelle il est impossible à un conquérant de toucher aujourd'hui), la rapidité de la circulation des idées que nous devons à la presse moderne et le fait que tout ce qui s'écrit peut se lire partout, permettent même à de petites communautés, complètement conquises, de faire entendre partout leur voix et de faire triompher les idées morales et sociales qui leur sont propres.

"Du reste, une lutte pour faire triompher un idéal ne sera plus jamais une lutte entre nations, car les idées se sont disséminées parmi les peuples, ont passè par-dessus les frontières.

"Il n'existe pas d'Etat moderne dont tous les sujets soient uniquement catholiques ou protestants, libéraux ou monarchistes, démocrates ou aristocrates, socialistes ou individualistes; c'est pour cela que les luttes d'ordre moral et spiritual se livreront désormais entre concitoyens d'un même Etat.

"La guerre ne peut plus prétendre qu'elle assure la survivance du plus fort; dans les conditions modernes, elle amène au contraire la survivance du plus faible, puisque ce sont les forts qui péris-

sent ; et c'est pour s'être laissé séduire par une fausse analogie biologique que l'on a pu croire que la lutte entre nations faisait partie de l'évolution humaine.

" Les nations guerrières n'hériteront pas de la terre ; elles représentent aujourd'hui la dégénérescence, car le déclin du rôle de la force physique, dans toutes les sphères de l'activité humaine, a produit de profonds changements psychologiques.

" Toutes ces tendances nouvelles, issues des conditions nouvelles du monde et notamment de la rapidité des communications, font que les problèmes de la politique internationale d'aujourd'hui sont tout différents de ceux d'autrefois. Et cependant nous laissons encore dominer notre pensée par les principes, les axiomes et la phraséologie même d'une politique surannée."

Telle est l'essence d'un livre remarquable qui, depuis sa publication, constitue à lui seul une littérature complète.

La brièveté de l'exposé peut faire paraître la thèse absurde en quelques points ; elle a fait cependant l'objet d'une discussion approfondie parmi quelques-uns des plus éminents économistes de mon pays. Je ne demande pas à un seul étudiant de l'accepter sans examen, mais je vous prie tous de ne pas la rejeter sans l'avoir examinée.

La guerre d'agression, est-elle un conflit nécessaire pour améliorer le sort d'un peuple ? La conquête est-elle avantageuse ? Ces deux questions demandent une réponse catégorique. Si l'on répond affirmativement cela veut dire que la sagesse humaine consiste à faire appel au fer et au sang.

Si le fer et le sang règlent seuls la question, un peuple de 40 millions d'âmes, vis-à-vis de celui qui en compte 100 ou 150 millions, un peuple stationnaire, vis-à-vis de celui qui s'accroît, est irrévocablement condamné.

Or, la question vaut au moins l'examen.

Heureusement, il y a d'autres facteurs en jeu, et ceux-ci sont puissants et indestructibles.

L'un de ces facteurs est l'énorme influence que possède la vérité lorsque celle-ci s'est fait jour à travers les ténèbres; et de même qu'à la fin du dix-huitème siècle, l'esprit français apportait une nouvelle contribution aux idées de l'Europe, explosive dans sa force, de même aujourd'hui encore, l'esprit français rencontre une merveilleuse occasion de s'élever contre une situation aussi ruineuse, aussi néfaste pour le bonheur des masses, que le fut jamais celle qui était due à l'ancien régime. Je veux parler des préparatifs de guerre dont les frais nous écrasent et nous appauvrissent.

Je me demande sans cesse quelle est l'idée qui se trouve à la base de ces constantes menaces de guerre; et je vous demande aussi, Messieurs, ce que vous en pensez.

Ne serait-ce pas, à franchement parler, la croyance à l'efficacité de la guerre, la croyance à quelque avantage en perspective, avantage que l'on obtiendra en attaquant son voisin, en lui arrachant quelque chose, en le forçant à passer sous les fourche caudines?

Supposons que la thèse économique d'Angell

soit vraie, et que par conséquence la vainqueur ne puisse obtenir du vaincu aucun avantage matériel sans avoir à payer son propre gain d'une valeur égale.

Cet vérité, une fois bien saisie, ne finirait-elle pas par changer à la longue la croyance dont je viens de parler ?

La thèse de Galilée n'était pas plus opposée aux idées courantes que ne l'est celle d'Angell, et cependant la première a bien eu à la fin sa part de succès.

S'il est vrai que les obligations internationales, les engagements mutuels, le commerce du monde et ses finances, avec leur " interdépendance," forment un ensemble de choses si complexe que tout préjudice causé à une grande nation doive avoir son contre-coup chez toutes les autres nations et sur tous les marchés, au point que toute guerre entreprise avec succès par quelque grand peuple civilisé contre un voisin civilisé également, doive demeurer une opération sans profit, alors, bien certainement, l'opinion publique, sur la question de l'efficacité de la guerre doit subir à la longue quelque modification. Qui croit encore, à l'heure actuelle, à l'utilité de la corvée ? Elle à eu cependant plus d'un champion dans son temps. Quand les hommes comprendront qu'un ennemi conquis est un client ruiné, et que client ruiné signifie perte sèche pour le vainqueur, auront-ils toujours le désir des conquêtes ?

Quand ils se rendront compte que les relations

économiques des grands peuples civilisés entre eux, et c'est là le point capital, ne sont véritablement que le symbole d'autres relations affectant la vie nationale dans toutes ses artères, et aussi les rapports des nationaux les uns avec les autres, les hommes voudront-ils tolérer la guerre ?

Je ne prétends pas que ces théories soient vraies pour toutes les nations et pour toujours ; mais je crois qu'elles le sont pour les grandes nations de l'Europe et pour l'époque actuelle. C'est un état de choses né d'évènements modernes, voire même de circonstances très récentes, car le système de crédit actuel, organisé sur une échelle si vaste qu'il embrasse en réalité le monde entier, est chose comparativement nouvelle.

Nous le devons aux progrès enormes que la Science a faits depuis une trentaine d'années, progrès à la suite desquels le monde s'est rapetissé plus que jamais, et continue encore à se rapetisser tellement, que les sons de la voix humaine s'entendront avant peu, d'un bout de la terre à l'autre, et que la traversée de l'océan ne durera pas plus que les heures de sommeil d'une nuit.

On peut retrouver dans l'histoire du passé des moments de conditions pareilles.

Un jeune étudiant de l'Université de Cambridge voulant concourir pour le prix Garton, a écrit un essai fort intéressant, où il applique la thèse d'Angell aux guerres entre les tribus de la Grèce antique, et où il montre les effets de ces conflits au point de vue financier et commercial, sur les divers

états, sur Athènes et sur Sparte. Ces effets, il les évalue en se livrant à une curieuse étude comparative sur le commerce de la poterie. Il démontre que sur le territoire limité compris entre les frontières de ce petit groupe d'états belligérants, la prospérité commerciale se recontra rarement après une victoire ou une conquête ; et il arriva enfin ce que tout le monde sait, que ce coin de l'Europe, devint la proie du barbare et de l'envahisseur en grande partie à cause de ses luttes intestines.

Je n'insiste pas sur ce point qui peut tenir de la chimère, et se montrer trompeur, comme toutes les analogies, mais c'est une vue d'ensemble de toute la question que je vous prie instamment d'examiner sans préjugé.

L'histoire de la Grèce antique, si brillament exposée par le plus pittoresque des écrivains historiques, un homme qui possédait une connaissance approfondie de ses compatriotes et qui s'efforçait toujours de placer leurs différents points de vue sous les yeux de ses lecteurs, nous inspire certainement des réflexions qui touchent à mon sujet.

Tout en lisant les discours aussi complets que pleins d'animation, prononcés jadis par ces orateurs d'Athènes et de Sparte, quelqu'un d'entre vous a-t-il jamais découvert une cause raisonnable à ces guerres fratricides et désastreuses ?

Ces hommes n'étaient pas des sauvages ; ils étaient et marchands et philosophes et artistes. Pourquoi donc, étaient-ils constamment en lutte les uns contre les autres ? L'homme primitif se

battait par nécéssite. La mort de son voisin signifiait pour lui gibier et racines en quantité plus abondante ; mais l'homme civilisé, avec ses mille besoins ne peut pas se permettre d'égorger ceux qui y pourvoient. Les premiers groupes d'individus, sauvages et indépendants les uns des autres, pouvaient toujours avec profit attaquer leurs voisins. Ils pouvaient s'arracher mutuellement leurs marchandises, leurs femmes et leurs esclaves. Il fut même un temps où une province française, enfermée dans ses propres frontières, aurait pu gagner en dévastant une province voisine, en emportant les richesses accumulées par cette dernière, son bétail, son grain, son or, et en massacrant ses habitants.

Mais aujourd'hui, si une grève de cheminaux interrompt les communications entre un département français et le département voisin, les forces vitales du premier se paralysent bientôt. Pourquoi ? Parce que le système le la répartition du travail nous à tous, à l'heure actuelle, rendus dépendants du voisin, et dépendants de la continuité ininterrompue du travail dans le monde entier.

C'est surtout par des considérations morales, ou encore pour des raisons economiques, que les individus d'abord et les petits groupes ensuite, les villes et les provinces, ont cessé de se battre, de dévaster et de faire des captures.

Permettez-moi, je vous prie, de pousser encore plus loin cette question.

Supposons que la France après un grand effort

militaire ait réussi à s'emparer de la Belgique, et que les Français étant devenus les maîtres de ce pays, les Belges de leur côté soient devenus, par la force des choses, citoyens de la République française ; y aurait-il un seul Français qui comme individu posséderait un centime de plus, aurait plus de bien-être ou serait plus prospère ?

La France elle-même serait-elle plus riche, plus prospère ou plus heureuse ?

C'est là une question à la fois théorique et pratique. Je ne prétends pas qu'une nation ne soit pas quelque chose de plus que les individus qui la composent. Comme l'a dit un grand homme d'état anglais,—" Une Nation est un être collectif réel et non point un être fictif. Collectivement elle peut triompher et souffrir."

Toutefois, ces dernières considérations s'addressent au sentiment, et à ce patriotisme d'un ordre plus élevé dont j'ai déjà parlé, et n'embrassent pas les guerres d'agression, les annexions ou les conquêtes. Si cependant nous devons faire des progrès, et continuer à accroître le bonheur du plus grand nombre, n'est-il pas essentiel d'établir cette première proposition, à savoir, qu'une guerre d'agression entamée avec nos voisins, les peuples civilisées, ne procure pas au simple citoyens le moindre avantage matériel. Si nous pouvons y arriver, nous aurons fait un pas énorme dans la voie qui conduit à la paix. Qu'est-ce que le peuple en Allemagne avec son intelligence et ses nombreuses qualités a retiré du fait, que ses

hommes d'état aient arraché à la France l'Alsace et la Lorraine. Quel est le paysan poméranien ou l'artisan bavarois qui soit devenu plus heureux et plus riche ? Si nous pouvions reculer les aiguilles du temps, le Prince de Bismarck voudrait-il encore annexer ces fatales provinces ?

Nous connaissons la réponse.

Ici se soulève une nouvelle question, celle de savoir ce que le peuple allemand a retiré de l'énorme indemnité qui lui a été payée après le traité de Frankfort. Je ne ferais que vous fatiguer, si je developpais devant vous ce côté du problème ; mais il forme un des chapitres les plus intéressants du livre d'Angell.

Je me contenterai de vous rappeler que le versement de l'indemnité de guerre à l'Allemagne a coïncidé avec une des plus terribles crises économiques connues dans l'histoire de ce pays.

Le Prince de Bismarck a déclaré au Reichstag, avec un certain pathétique, que, peu d'années après la guerre, il avait été frappé de l'état général de misère croissante qu'il constatait en Allemagne, s'il comparait celle-ci avec la France. Sa vie a été assombrie par des doutes qu'il n'éclaircit jamais complètement, à propos de ce qu'avaient rapporté à l'Allemagne les sommes immenses arrachées à la France. Les plus grands hommes d'état sont, après tout, empiriques. Bismarck aurait pu se consoler en se rappelant le fait que Colbert, qui n'était pas le moindre des penseurs, identifiait la richesse d'un état avec la quantité d'or et

d'argent qu'il contenait ; qu'il considérait le volume total du commerce de l'Europe comme ne pouvant s'accroître matériellement, et qu'enfin il ne douta jamais du fait que ce qu'une nation gagnait, une autre devait nécessairement le perdre.

Bien des gens parmi nous conservent encore la croyance illusoire que dix écus que nous pouvons voir ont plus de poids qu'un million que nous ne pouvons manier ; et bien plus de gens encore sont convaincus qu'une nation peut s'enrichir par la guerre.

Vous comprenez sans doute qu'il m'est totalement impossible de discuter aujourd'hui ces théories à fond : mais je voudrais stimuler chez-vous le doute et la curiosité.

Ces questions ont une portée pratique formidable. Jetez les regards sur l'Europe. Partout l'appréhension terrifiante de la guerre. Partout les armements gigantesques qui augmentent à prix d'or. Pas de but défini en vue. Et ce qu'il y a de pire, pas de prix pour sa peine. Ou bien ce vaste gaspillage d'argent ne conduit à rien, ou bien il conduit à la guerre. Et dans les deux cas, qui en profite en rien ?

Sir Edward Grey disait, il y a peu de temps, que nous redoutions tous de voir, à la longue, les dépenses énormes consacrées aux armements, conduire aux catastrophes, et même faire sombrer le vaisseau qui porte la prospérité et la civilisation de l'Europe.

Mais pouvez-vous vous étonner que cette folle

dépense soit justifée par des considérations de prudence, quand vous entendez un écrivain allemand éminent, aux vues saines et modérées, le Baron von Stengel, délégué à la première conference de La Haye, nous déclarer que, "Chaque grande puissance doit faire tendre tous ses efforts à exercer l'influence la plus étendue possible, non seulement sur la politique de l'Europe, mais sur celle du monde entier, et cela surtout, parce que la puissance économique dépend en dernier ressort de la puissance politique,"

Tandis que l'amiral Americani, M. Mahan, assure que "Le vieil instinct de pillage vit encore" ; et que —"les marchés commerciaux sont dominés par la puissance prépondérante et celle-ci a pour expression dernière la possession."

Evidemment l'amiral partage la croyance que l'intérêt d'une nation consiste à tuer l'industrie d'une autre. C'est-la une illusion du dix-huitième siècle. Mais si ces gens ont raison, quelles sont nos espérances pour l'avenir ?

Eh bien, le théorème d'Angell est tout l'opposé.

Il déclare que ces dogmes acceptés jusqu'ici sont faux. La puissance militaire assure-t-il, ne peut pas, effectivement, ou d'une façon latente, dominer les marchés pour leur bien. Pourquoi ? Parce que dans un monde où les frontières économiques s'étendent et se resserrent d'année en année indéfiniment et dans toutes les directions, l'entité politique ne coïncide pas avec l'entité économique, pour la raison que les nations civilisées sont des organismes

non pas séparés mais "interdépendants," et que par conséquent, la richesse est insaisissable pour ce qui regarde la conquête et la confiscation.

Un homme d'état, je cite encore notre ministre des affaires étrangères, vient de corroborer cela dans un discours prononcé il y a quelques semaines. Il a employé la phrase—"le maître d'école de l'Europe." De qui a-t-il voulu parler? Du soldat ou philosophe? Non; "le maître d'école de l'Europe," a dit Sir Edward Grey—"s'appelle les finances."

"Le poids des finances," ajoute-t-il, "est la chose qui démontrera aux gens, la nécessité de diminuer les risques de guerre, et de maintenir dans les limites voulues la concurrence en fait de dépenses pour les armements"—puis il continue à expliquer que les nations et spécialement les hommes politiques devront se convertir à l'idée qu'il y a plus à gagner par la paix que par la guerre, une opération de longue haleine, et il emploie la phrase: "il vous faut créer une atmosphère."

C'est précisément la tâche que je me suis assignée ce soir. Je désire avoir ma petite part dans la création d'une atmosphère appropriée à l'étude des nouveaux facteurs économiques dans la politique de l'Europe.

Ceux-ci pénètrent profondément dans les rapports des états civilisés entre eux, à des profondeurs que n'avaient rêvées ni Aristote, ni Machiavel, ni Clausewitz. Peut-être cependant s'étaient-ils déjà logés dans un petit recoin du vaste cerveau de Napoléon.

Je vous demande avec instance, Messieurs, d'examiner les axiômes du Général von Bernhardi, les axiômes qui veulent justifier l'agression et la présenter comme avantageuse, à la lumière de ces rayons lumineux que le livre d'Angell vient jeter sur l'impossibilité économique de la confiscation à la suite d'une guerre heureuse, sur les rapports faussement conçus entre le commerce et la puissance militaire, sur le caractère illusoire des indemnités de guerre, sur la véritable signification des possessions coloniales, et sur la lutte pour une place au soleil.

Il est impossible de résister à la conviction que ce jeune penseur a ouvert pour nous un nouveau chapitre dans l'histoire de notre monde moderne.

Parlons maintenant, un moment, de la guerre de défense. Chacune des puissances de l'Europe soutient et peut-être croit que ses armements ne sont maintenus que par motif de défense. Certainement en Angleterre nous croyons honnêtement que nous maintenons notre flotte pour notre propre défense et sans la moindre pensée d'hostilité. Les Allemands ne cessant jamais de déclarer que leur vaste marine de guerre toujours grandissante est due à la nécessité de défendre leur commerce. Chaque puissance croit à la possibilité d'une agression de la part d'une autre ; et elle croit en plus, que vouloir affaiblir en rien ses forces navales défensives, serait faire une invitation immédiate à l'attaque, et la provoquer. Les formidables armées d'Europe sont levées et maintenues sous des pre-

textes semblables. Notre Ministre de la Marine, homme brillant et intelligent Mr. Churchill, nous dit que—"le moyen d'assurer la paix est d'être si fort que la victoire sur votre ennemi ne puisse vous échapper."

La phrase sonne bien à l'oreille, mais est-ce là une maxime pour l'Angleterre seule? Ou bien s'applique-t-elle aussi à tout puissant adversaire de notre pays, ou à chacune des puissances de premier ordre.

Si nous répondons—oui—comment est-elle applicable, et comment un problème qui est une question de vie ou de mort pour deux intéressés, peut-il trouver une formule satisfaisante dans les termes d'un seul? La vérité est, qu'une semblable formule n'est pas un axiôme de défense mais un axiôme d'agression, non pas intentionnelle, bien loin de la mais inconsciente, et que telle a été la base sur laquelle s'est appuyée toute ambition conquérante depuis le commencement du monde. Si la paix ne peut être assurée sans que chaque nation soit assez forte pour être certaine de la victoire sur son ennemi, nous sommes tous pris dans un cercle vicieux d'absurdité, et notre unique perspective est la ruine financière et commerciale.

Le côté grave de la question est, que toutes les grandes puissances de l'Europe agissent aujourd'hui comme si l'axiôme de Mr. Churchill était l'essence de la vérité.

Cela prouve, une fois de plus, le peu de valeut que possédent les faits en eux-mêmes; ce qui

compte vraiment c'est la soi-disant foi que nous y ajoutons.

Mais où donc est la porte de sortie ? Accumuler armements sur armements n'est pas offrir une solution. Sommes-nous réduits à conclure qu'il nous faudra, ici, au cœur même de l'Europe civilisée, demeurer à jamais armés jusqu'aux dents, nous attendant à l'attaque d'un voisin dès que notre vigilance se relâchera, en proie parfois à la guerre civile, et que nous devons accepter cette situation comme étant un état de choses normal, et une forme définitive de la Société ?

Ou bien, comme l'a fait Rousseau dans une autre sphère et à une autre époque, Angell a-t-il ouvert la brèche pour la fuite et donné à l'humanité de nouvelles espérances ?

Le remède à notre intolérable plaie va-t-il venir, non des hommes politiques et des hommes d'état, mais d'une école de la pensée et du domaine des idées, pénétrant dans l'esprit du peuple lui-même ? Si l'on peut créer une atmosphère dans laquelle les hommes et surtout les jeunes gens pourront compléter cet examen de questions telles que les finances internationales, les communautés d'intérêt et d'association, l'interdépendance des travailleurs des diverses nations, les liens divers qui se multiplient d'année en année ; peut-être qu'en exposant la fausseté des théories erronées, en donnant une juste interprétation aux rivalités nationales mal comprises, nous pourrons, étant donné l'inanité des actions agressives, et l'absence de véritables

menaces, trouver la solution du problème de la défense nationale.

S'il en est ainsi, le remède suprême n'est pas à la portée des gouvernements et des bureaucraties, mais il se trouve dans l'intelligence des simples citoyens et dans leur influence active.

Je crois fermement que nous traversons aujourd'hui une période de transition, sans nous en apercevoir sans doute. A ces heures-là, les difficultés sont toujours doublées. La sécurité publique, loi suprême, demande de grands sacrifices. Nous devons tous être prêts à les accomplir tandis que la meule de Dieu fait lentement son œuvre.

Avant d'arriver à la réduction des armements il nous reste encore un long chemin à faire.

Comment devons-nous procéder ? Je ne puis indiquer que deux idées. La première est chose facile et à la portée de tous. Examinez ces nouvelles doctrines, examinez-les dans vos universités, examinez-les dans vos colléges, examinez-les chez vous. Organisez des cercles d'étude, des clubs dans vos grandes villes, là oú vous avez des marchands et des financiers. Rappelez à ceux qui font reposer leur foi sur l'expérience et sur les vieux dictons, comment la science elle-même, la lente et scrupuleuse science, a souvent, en s'appuyant sur les méthodes d'induction et sur l'éxpérimentation élevé des systèmes qui on été acceptés comme des vérités immortelles, jusqu'au jour où quelque patient chercheur, toujours au labeur a, soudainement et dans l'espace d'un éclair, renversé les conceptions

anciennes ; et c'est ainsi que les lois de l'évolution ou celles de la déperdition des forces physiques possèdent pour une nouvelle génération un sens entièrement nouveau.

Ma première proposition donc est que nous fassions tous nos efforts pour comprendre et disséminer l'idée que, comme l'exprime Mr. Balfour ;—"La guerre d'agression entreprise entre nations civilisées dans le but d'augmenter le bonheur, la richesse et la prospérité de l'agresseur, est à la fois inutile et stupide."

Quant à ma deuxième proposition, j'en prends seul la responsabilité. Je ne l'ai jamais discutée avec personne d'important. Je l'émets comme venant d'un membre d'une université anglaise, et adressée aux étudiants de l'université de Paris.

Nous avons tous eu l'occasion de voir osciller sous nos yeux, depuis bien des années, les chances de paix ou de guerre. Pour moi, je ne doute pas un instant que le facteur le plus puissant qui aît servi la cause de la paix, pendant les temps actuels, je parle de la paix entre les grandes puissances elles-mêmes. n'ait été la Triple Alliance. Je ne songe pas, bien entendu, à rabaisser en rien le valeur de la Triple Entente, à une époque plus récente.

Au contraire, la portée qu'a eue cette dernière, donne plus de poids et plus de force à ce que je vais dire : je prétends que l'espoir de voir la paix maintenue en Europe pendant la période de transition, pendant ces heures difficiles que nous avons à vivre jusqu'à ce que l'esprit du public aît perçu

clairement ce que voudrait dire une guerre fratricide européenne, au vingtième siècle, cet espoir, dis-je repose sur le système des alliances.

J'ai beaucoup moins de foi dans le système des ententes comme base de la paix. Les fondements en sont plus glissants et moins fermes. Une alliance dont les termes sont définis, dont les devoirs et les responsabilités sont bien compris par tous les intéressés, dont les effets sont évidents pour tout le monde est un roc sur lequel les parties contractantes se maintiennent solidement et dont il n'est pas facile de les déloger.

Tout homme qui déteste la guerre et désire la paix devrait saluer avec joie une alliance entre mon pays et le vôtre, la conversion, pour mieux dire, de la triple entente en une seconde triple alliance.

Alors nous ne serions plus bien loin d'atteindre un but auquel les plus jeunes d'entre vous pourrons se voir eux-mêmes arriver de leur vivant, à savoir toutes les grandes puissances formant un concert basé sur la raison et la communauté des intérêts, et dont on aura fait disparaître cet élément d'incertitude, les risques de l'action individuelle.

Essayons, comme l'a suggéré Sir Edward Grey de créer une atmosphère. Une atmosphère nouvelle suppose imagination et idéal ; et c'est dans cette ambiance seulement, que peut naître une ère de paix pour l'Europe, d'une paix solide et que nul ne puisse rompre.

Mes compatriotes, tout le monde le sait, ont une horreur au cœur pour les alliances, pour ce qu'ils

appellent les liaisons embrouillées. Ils songent avec regret à leur ancien rôle de splendide isolement. Ils oublient que pour vous aussi il sera dur de renoncer aux souvenirs et aux espérances qui vous tiennent tant au cœur ; souvenirs de gloire militaire du passé, vénérables conceptions d'honneur militaire, espoirs non satisfaits. Au dessus de nos têtes à tous, plane l'esprit de sacrifice, et du sacrifice seul naîtra le progrès ; c'est la loi de la vie.

S'il est vrai que la tendance chez nous soit au matérialisme et chez vous à l'idéalisme, il est merveilleux que nous soyons si bons amis. Napoléon disait, il y a cent ans :—" Deux puissances comme la France et l'Angleterre, en s'entendant bien pourraient gouverner le monde."

C'est vrai, mais nous n'avons nul désir de gouverner le monde. Nous désirons que les peuples se gouvernent eux-mêmes, et trouvent eux-mêmes leur voie dans le recherche de la prospérité et du bonheur.

Quel changement d'idéal, quel changement de point de vue, dans l'espace d'un siècle !

Pour précipiter la marche des idées qui fait abandonner les convictions anciennes, il n'y a qu'un moyen : détruire ces théorémes compliqués dans lesquels le passé a enveloppé des faits simples et manifestes. S'il n'en était pas ainsi, on verrait encore les gens brûler les sorcières, et se massacrer les uns les autres pour quelques différences dans leurs croyances réligieuses.

Considérez combien il importe de désaccoutumer

les esprits d'une estimation exagérée de la gloire et de la portée d'une guerre heureuse, afin de permettre d'évaluer sainement ce qui reste aux vainqueurs après tout compte fait.

Comptons d'abord ce que coûte la guerre elle-même, puis ce qu'elle coûte à organiser. Songeons aux richesses énormes, au dévouement des plus grandes intelligences, aux efforts inestimables d'homme de culture sacrifiés à cet art d'extermination, tout cela au sein d'une civilisation que l'on place bien au dessus de celles de la Grèce et de Rome, et deux mille ans après la venue de l'Apôtre de la paix.

Supposez, nous dit-on, que tout cet or et toute cette intelligence soient consacrée à organiser la paix.

Ne voyez-vous pas là un idéal digne des peuples animés d'idées de progrès et de patriotisme, et cet idéal entre-t-il nécessairement en conflit avec une noble et suprême foi dans les destinées de la patrie ?

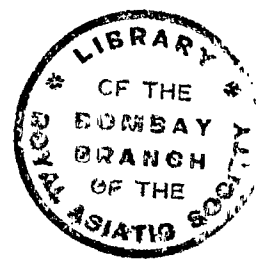
Je me suis efforcé de faire un tableau rapide de ces nouvelles propositions, des doutes et des aspirations qui ont profondément troublé quelques uns des esprits les plus sérieux parmi mes compatriotes. J'ai peur que mon exposé ne soit faible et insuffisant ; mais " l'âme a toujours foi dans le rayon."

Messieurs, il y une unité dans l'histoire, il y a une continuité ordonnée dans la civilisation et dans la Science.

Bossuet, en insistant sur " l'enchaînement de l'univers " appuie sur la disposition secrète des

évènements qui préparent la voie aux grands changements. Si nous pouvions lire les secrets du mois d'Août d'il y a quatre ans, alors que la guerre fut si près d'éclater en Europe, nous pourrions en éprouver, c'est là ma conviction, un sentiment de profonde consolation et de vive espérance pour l'avenir ; nous y verrions aussi la preuve de l'influence, de l'interdépendance des peuples sur les actes des gouvernements.

Mais il est une chose dont je suis encore plus sûr, c'est que lorsque dans l'avenir on fera le compte de tout le labeur, de toute la sagesse, de toutes les lumières de l'intelligence qui vont, chaque jour, servir à construire notre édifice social, l'œuvre du jeune écrivain anglais, M. Norman Angell, dont j'ai si souvent parlé, œuvre composée à Paris et publiée d'abord en Angleterre, trouvera sa place marquée à part.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